’Arṣû and ‘Azîzû

A Study of the West Semitic “Dioscuri” and the Gods of Dawn and Dusk

By Finn Ove Hvidberg-Hansen

Historiske-filosofiske Meddelelser 97

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Abstract

Among the mythological and cultic texts from the fourteenth to the twelfth centuries BC that were found in the 1930s at Ras Shamra-Ugarit in north Syria, the text KTU 1.23 describes the birth of the two sons of god "Dawn and Dusk", with the west Semitic names Shaḥar and Shalim, also referred to as "the gracious and beautiful gods". After the publication of the text it quickly became obvious that Shaḥar and Shalim – as representing dawn and evening glow and thus corresponding to Phosphorus and Hesperus – are comparable with the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux. Shaḥar and Shalim in their capacity as the dawn and evening glow are closely associated with their role as the Morning- and Evening Star, which according to Semitic mythology both paves the way for the rise of the sun and accompanies its entry into the nocturnal shadow world. With epigraphical and iconographical material from Palmyra as the point of departure, ʻAzîzû and ʼArṣû/Munʻîm corresponding to Shaḥar and Shalim and known in Edessa as Azizos and Monimos, are traced further to the Nabataean-north Arabian and south Arabian areas. The mythological data of this material are confronted, first *en détail* with the far older Ugaritic text, next with reminiscences of later Old Testament and apocalyptic literature.

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1. ’Arṣû and ‘Azîzû in Palmyra and the Palmyrène. Names and Position

“Like Dawn (Shaḥar) his going forth is certain…”
Book of Hosea 6,3

Among the many deities that characterize the Palmyrene pantheon the god ’Arṣû takes up a quite prominent position, both in the epigraphical and not less in the iconographical material. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of ’Arṣû’s position appears from two Greco-Palmyrene inscriptions from AD 132 and 144, found respectively in the Ba‘alshamîn temple and the Allât temple. Here four temples are enumerated, one of which belongs to ’Arṣû, in the two Greek inscriptions referred to as Ares. The other temples are those of Ba‘alshamîn (only mentioned in one inscription) and of the goddesses Atargatis and Allât (the latter only mentioned in the second inscription). In both inscriptions the fourth shrine is called “the Garden of the Gods”, no doubt the place for the worship of the gods ‘Aglibôl and Malakbel[1]. After the excavations in the years 1974-75 we now know the place of the Allât temple, while the Atargatis temple has not yet been found. Possibly “the Garden of the Gods” may be located in the area surrounding the ancient, sacred spring Efqa[2]. In return, since 1980 archaeological probings in the area west of the Palmyra agora resulting in the find of a Palmyrene inscription on an altar sacred to ’Arṣû and dated to AD 63 have proved that his shrine was here[3]. Since 1980 two later (AD 279-280) bilingual inscriptions, found west of Tetrapylon and referring to “the great basilica” (i. e. *por-*

1. PAT 0197, from the Ba‘alshamîn temple; Drijvers (1995) 31-42, from the Allât temple. On the four temples and their gods see Kaizer (2002) 60-66; 79-88; 99-108; 116-142, and 153-154.
2. Indicated as a possible location by Dunant (1971) 59. M. Gawlikowski assumes that “the Garden of the Gods” is to be sought east of the Bel temple, see Gawlikowski (1973) 49-51. Later, however, he tends to assume a location near “Diocletian’s Camp”, see Gawlikowski (1976) 158, cf. Starcky and Gawlikowski (1985) 96-97.
3. As‘ad and Texidor (1985) 286-293; see on this altar inscription p. 58-63 *infra*.

ticus) of Ares-'Arṣû have further confirmed the location of this temple and its continued existence after Queen Zenobia's fall in AD 273[4].

The tribe Mattabôl, one of four prominent tribes or clans in Palmyra, is mentioned as the author of these two inscriptions and of the one from the 'Arṣû temple[5]. Originating from a man of this tribe, an altar fragment is known which is also dedicated to 'Arṣû and which may be dated to approximately AD 50[6]. Further, an (undated) relief, found in the Bel temple, is dedicated to nd "the Tutelary Deity of the Gardens and to the god 'Arṣû and the god Raḥim" (*gd' dy gny' wl 'rṣw wlrḥm*)[7]. Here was also found, in 1899, the inscription which in the account that follows will play a prominent role, partly owing to the subject of the relief, accompanied by the text, partly owing to the text itself, which is as follows: "For 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû, the good and rewarding gods" (fig. 1,a). Unfortunately, the dating is doubtful, but probably it is either AD 113 or AD 123[8].

In the relief there is seen on the left a person placing an incense offering on a small altar. Immediately to the right of this is seen a camel-rider wearing Roman military costume: a helmet and cuirass, and armed with a round buckler ornamented with a Medusa head; in his right hand he holds a lance[9]. On the left one sees a horseman, also holding a lance and a round buckler ornamented with a star that fills up the buckler. Judging from the positions of the two riders in relation to the sacrificing person, and compared with the inscription, which mentions 'Arṣû first, the latter must be identified with the camel-rider, and the horseman

4. As'ad and Gawlikowski (1986-87) 167-168 (nos. 7 and 8). The term "basilica" here means "colonnade" (*porticus*), cf. Gawlikowski (1973) 74.
5. A complete survey of major and minor clans and tribes is given by Gawlikowski (1973) 31-41; on the four most prominent tribes see Yon (2002) 69-78; on Mattabôl: p. 75 sqq.
6. PAT 0321 = CIS II, 3975, which Milik (1972) 18 dates to ca. AD 50.
7. PAT 1621, first published by Starcky (1962) 124-132.
8. PAT 0320 = CIS II, 3974; the relief reproduced by Drijvers (1976), pl. 68, 1. On the dating see Dijkstra (1995) 100-101.
9. The relief described by Ingholt (1928) 44-46. According to P. Linant de Bellefonds, LIMC, s.v. 'Arṣû, no. 10, the camel-rider besides lance and shield also carries a bow and quiver (but the two last-named attributes are not seen in the relief !).

with ‘Azîzû. ‘Azîzû is also known as a horseman from a Palmyrene relief (fig. 1,b), the inscription of which has "‘Azîz, the good one"[10]. That ’Arṣû was seen as a camel-rider is presumably also confirmed by a stele from Dura Europos showing a standing warrior with lance and shield; the inscription under the figure goes: "Oga the sculptor has made (this to) ’Arṣû the camel-rider, for the life of his son" (fig. 2)[11].

If, then, it can be established that ’Arṣû in a riding position – apart from two possible exceptions[12] – is depicted and regarded as a camel-riding god, we can supplement the relief showing ’Arṣû riding on a camel with a corresponding relief from Khirbet as-Souane (the Palmyrène); the relief, which is a fragment and besides anepigraphical, on the right shows a man bringing an incense offering to a camel-rider with a lance and shield, on the left the front part of a horse whose now absent rider was undoubtedly ‘Azîzû (fig. 3)[13]. An exactly corresponding picture of ’Arṣû receiving an incense offering is found in a relief from Dura Europos, though the well preserved relief does not show the sacrificing person; in return there is seen on the left a palm crowned with a halfmoon, while on the right above the rider there is seen a

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10. Drijvers (1976), pl. 66, 2; PAT 1937 = Gawlikowski (1974), no. 151; it is worth noting that the dedicator's name is *Mn‘ym*, thus actually the same name as that of ‘Azîzû's friend or companion in Edessa (cf. p. 12-13 *infra*), and with the same variant of the name as in the inscription from AD 138 dedicated to the god Mun‘îm, mentioned below (p. 13 and note 12).
11. Thus Ingholt (in: Frye e. a. 1955) 138-139, later modified according to Downey (1977) 54, but endorsed by Dijkstra (1995) 260 and by Dirven (1999) 319-320; on the stele cf. Dirven, op. cit., pl. XV = LIMC, s.v. ’Arṣû, no. 2*; for the inscription: PAT 1113.
12. Relief from the Palmyrène showing a horseman, according to the AD 157 inscription, and dedicated to "’Arṣû, the good and rewarding god", see Starcky (1957) 370-380, with correction of the god's name: Milik (1972) 21-22, endorsed by Starcky (1976) 330, note 20, cf. also LIMC, s.v. ’Arṣû, no. 4. – Another relief from the Palmyrène, dated to AD 138, showing a lance-carrying horseman, is dedicated to the god Mun‘îm, who must be seen as identical with ’Arṣû (cf. *infra*, p. 13 and note 34), see Starcky (1972) 57-65, pl. I; Drijvers (1976), pl. 69.
13. PNO, 74, no. 10 and pl. 34, 1; Drijvers (1976), pl. 68, 2, and LIMC, s.v. ’Arṣû, no. 11*.

rosette, probably with astral implications (fig. 4)[14]. A similar camel-rider, probably 'Arṣû, is seen on the Palmyrene tessera RTP, 177 (face a) (fig. 5). On tessera RTP, 184 (face a) is seen a loaded camel, above which is the name 'Arṣû (fig. 6)[15]. This tessera can be supplemented with RTP, 176, whose front (face a) shows a standing camel, while the other (face b) has an inscription which can be translated "to the guarding one, to 'Arṣû" or "to the gracious one, to 'Arṣû" (fig. 7)[16]. RTP, 175, face b, has the same names, but in inverse order, while face a shows the bust of a helmeted warrior with a halo round his head, between two standards, each carrying a standing figure wearing a cuirass (fig. 8). It is natural, with J. Starcky, to interpret the figures as the sun, flanked by 'Azîzû and 'Arṣû in their capacity as the morning and evening star[17]. As a warrior wearing a cuirass and a plumed helmet, but standing, and armed with lance and shield, 'Arṣû's name is given on RTP, 170 (face a) (fig. 9), while RTP, 192 (face a, damaged at the top) also mentions 'Arṣû, with lance and shield. A sacrificial scene on RTP, 178 (face a) like the two abovementioned reliefs shows an incense offering which is here given to a standing camel, probably symbolizing 'Arṣû (fig. 10). Face b shows a standing priest, in each hand holding a standard carrying a statuette; on each side there are three rosettes, presumably of astral significance. Besides, he is seen as a warrior with shield and lance on RTP, 196 (face a), which contains the inscription "'Arṣû is great" (fig. 11). To this tessera may be added RTP, 190 (face a) with the inscription "Great is 'Arṣû"; below one sees a star between two rams' heads; face b below shows a kneeling camel, above, a

14. Downey (1977) 55-56; pl. 11, 43; LIMC, s.v. 'Arṣû, no. 3*. From Dura Europos we have a very fragmentary relief showing a stick-carrying figure leading a camel; in front of this figure a grafitto that has been interpreted as: AP..., possibly the beginning of Greek "Ares", cf. the latter's identification with 'Arṣû, p. 5 *supra*, see Downey (1970) 139-140; pl.; *ead.* (1977) 56-57, pl. 11, 44; Kaizer (2002) 122.

15. A star encircled by a halfmoon to the left of the name 'Arṣû probably suggests the latter's astral character, cf. fig. 4 and tessera RTP, 169, face a: a helmeted bust of 'Arṣû wearing a cuirass, left a star, right the god's name.

16. The full inscription runs: *bny 'bd lr'y' 'rṣw*, i. e. "Abd's sons to the guarding one, to 'Arṣû". On the translation "guarding" or "gracious" see Caquot, PNO, 157; 182-183; Milik (1972) 48.

17. See RTP, pl. X, 175 and frontispiece, 175; on the two standards see note 18 *infra*.

bust without headgear and placed in a halfmoon with upturned points, finishing in a ball. This topic is seen on RTP, 197 (face a), showing 'Arṣû standing, wearing a cuirass and leaning his right hand on a lance, with over his right shoulder a round shield and in his left hand a sword; on the left is the inscription "'Arṣû Bel" (fig. 12)[18].

In the Palmyrene relief mentioned earlier, showing 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû (fig. 1,a), 'Arṣû is dressed in Roman military costume, while 'Azîzû wears local Oriental clothes. In the same Roman garb 'Arṣû is seen in a relief from Qaryateyn, about 100 km southwest of Palmyra; on the left he is seen standing, with his name engraved left, while on the right is seen an eagle perching on the peak of a mountain; above the eagle is the name "Elâhagabal", i. e. "the God Mountain", the well-known sun god *Elagabalus* from Emesa whom the Emperor Heliogabalus (218-222) favoured[19]. That 'Arṣû should appear in a Roman cuirass, in Greek and Roman iconography normally reserved for the god of war Ares-Mars[20], tallies completely with the abovementioned identification in Palmyra of 'Arṣû with Ares. But as emphasized by H. Seyrig, 'Arṣû in Palmyrene iconography shares the Roman military clothing with the most prominent Palmyrene gods: 'Aglibôl, Ba'alshamîn, Bel, Malakbel and Yarḥibôl[21]. The important position of 'Arṣû in Palmyra, emphasized by the two previously mentioned Greco-Palmyrene inscriptions enumerating four major shrines, among them 'Arṣû's, can probably – as will be mentioned later – be explained by the fact that a god of 'Arṣû's character has roots far back in north Arabian and Northwest Semitic religion[22]. A number

18. On the relationship 'Arṣû – Bel see Dirven (1999) 91-93 (in Palmyra); p. 275-278 and pl. X about a relief dedicated to Bel, from Dura Europos; the central figure is here seen holding a standard in each hand, carrying a statuette holding shield and lance. Referring *inter alia* to RTP, 175 Dirven wants to identify the statuette with 'Arṣû and Allat, see op. cit. 93; 277, note 317. It is assumed by Starcky (1956) 226 and Gawlikowski (1990) 2622 that these statuettes represent 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû (the morning and evening star), while Kaizer (2002) 120 with note 280 vacillates between the two possibilities.
19. Starcky (1975-76) 503-520.
20. Seyrig (1971) 67.
21. Seyrig (1970) 83, cf. Starcky (1975-76) 504, note 2.
22. Kaizer (2002) 118 on 'Arṣû's position in Palmyra; on his roots in older North Arabian religion: Starcky (1975-76) 505, and further *infra*, pp. 35-37.

of reliefs from Palmyra and the Palmyrène confirm that 'Arṣû is a prominent god in the Palmyrene pantheon.

Thus a relief from Gabal al-Merah about 75 km northwest of Palmyra shows Bel, Yarḥibôl, 'Aglibôl and 'Arṣû, mentioned in this order and with the last-mentioned furthest to the left, all of them wearing military costume, 'Arṣû with a cone-shaped helmet, a shield and a lance[23]. A relief from Wadi Arafa, near Gabal al-Abyad, 30 km northwest of Palmyra, like the previous one shows a person performing an incense offering, and a number of deities indicated by the inscription as being Ashtarte, 'Aglibôl, Malakbel, Bel, Ba'alshamîn, Nemesis and 'Arṣû, plus Abgal (now broken off the relief[24]). From the Bel temple comes a well preserved, but anepigraphical relief showing the so-called Bel triad consisting of Bel, 'Aglibôl and Yarḥibôl, with whom a fourth god joins whose military equipment: cuirass (*paludamentum*), lance, shield and cone-shaped helmet, clearly identifies him as being 'Arṣû (fig. 13)[25]. An equally well preserved relief from the Allat temple shows 'Arṣû in the same figure, here side by side with Allat, who is represented as the Greek Athene[26]. An unfortunately fragmentary relief, also from the Allat temple, presents two standing figures, both wearing Roman military costume, one with a cone-shaped helmet and carrying a quiver over the shoulder while holding a camel by the bridle, the other figure, now lacking the head, carrying a lance. Above, the sun god's name can be read: "Yarḥibôl". It cannot be definitely stated to which of them the name refers since the halo that otherwise characterizes Yarḥibôl is lacking; it is very likely that one of the two figures represents 'Arṣû, thus here depicted as accompanying one of the most prominent gods of Palmyra[27].

'Arṣû has the same prominent status and military equipment in

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23. Bounni (1966) 314-316 and fig. 3; Drijvers (1976), pl. 9, 1 (Palmyra Mus., inv. no. 1233 A). PAT, 1569.
24. Bounni (1966) 316-319 and fig. 4; Drijvers (1976), pl. 10, 2 (Palmyra Mus., inv. no. 1234 A). PAT, 1569.
25. Drijvers (1976), pl. 7; LIMC, s.v. 'Aglibôl, no. 7, and s.v. 'Arṣû, no. 14 (Palmyra Mus., inv. no. 1221).
26. Drijvers (1978) 338-339; pl. 73; Ruprechtsberger (1987) 309, fig. 31, cf. LIMC, s.v. Allat, no . 13.
27. See Gawlikowski (1987) 310, no. 32, cf. Dirven (1999) 94, note 126 and Kaizer (2002) 107.

Dura Europos, as he is seen in a fresco from the Bel temple showing the Roman tribune Iulius Terentius performing an incense offering to the three named gods ‘Aglibôl, Yarḥibôl and ’Arṣû; in the bottom left corner are seen the tutelary deities (Tyché) for Dura Europos and Palmyra, a feature that underlines the official character of the gods depicted. All three gods are seen with a halo round the head, ’Arṣû besides with a helmet (cf. RTP, 175, face b)[28]. Finally, his position in Dura Europos is confirmed by another contemporary fresco (from the early third century AD) in which ’Arṣû with halo, helmet and shield, standing to the right of ‘Aglibôl and Yarḥibôl, is the central figure[29].

The clearest expression of ’Arṣû’s high position in the Palmyrene pantheon is the ceiling decoration of Thalamos Nord in the Bel temple in Palmyra (fig. 14), where each of the busts of six planets represents its deity, with the bust of Bel-Jupiter forming the central subject. Here one sees, immediately above the Bel bust, the god Ares-Mars *alias* ’Arṣû, wearing the same cone-shaped helmet as for instance in the Bel temple relief previously referred to (fig. 1,a). This position among the other planet deities besides the martial aspect also signifies the astral aspect of of ’Arṣû’s character, testified to by the symbols on various tesserae previously mentioned, and is moreover emphasized by the zodiac surrounding Bel and the six planets in the ceiling decoration[30].

A more detailed identification of ’Arṣû and ‘Azîzû as astral deities must take as its point of departure the relief inscription for ’Arṣû and ‘Azîzû mentioned on p. 6 and in note 8. The latter god appears in a number of Latin inscriptions from Dacia and Algeria under the name *Azizos deus bonus puer phosphorus*, i. e. as the morning star, which together with the evening star makes up the pair of gods termed the Dioscuri. The inscriptions in question, which are presumably related to Syrian soldiers in Roman service, are dated to the period from the Emperor Commodus

28. Seyrig (1932) 190-195 with (an excellent) photo, pl. 43; cf. LIMC, s.v. ’Arṣû, no. 12, and Dirven (1999) 304-309; pl. 13; the gods mentioned in the inscription, PAT, 1081.
29. Drijvers (1976), pl. 19; cf. LIMC, s.v. ’Arṣû, no. 13, and Dirven (1999) 301-303, pl. 12. – On ’Arṣû’s central position in Dura Europos see Dirven, 67-69; 97 and 192.
30. Seyrig-Amy-Will (1975), Texte, 83-84; Album, 58; Gawlikowski (1980-81) 21-23; idem (1990) 2611-2613; LIMC, s.v. Ares (orient.), no. 7.

(180-192) and onwards – the last one, however, found in Lambaesis, Numidia, from 270-275[31]. With ʻAzîzû, "the youthful Morning Star Phosphorus" (as formulated by Drijvers) as one of the two riding gods mentioned in the Bel temple relief (fig. 1,a), it is a straightforward matter to identify 'Arṣû with the evening star or Hesperus. It is true of both gods that their astral functions and positions tally well with the meaning of their respective names. ʻAzîzû is "the powerful, the strong or forceful one", from common Semitic ʻzz, while 'Arṣû's name, also from common Semitic, is formed from *rḍw* "gracious, mild". Like the morning star, ʻAzîzû/Azizos is the one that powerfully paves the way through darkness for the rising sun, while 'Arṣû in the form of the evening star heralds the setting of the sun and the mild calm and security that in the Orient follow upon the heat and activity of the day[32].

Common to the two gods is, however, their character as armed protectors and companions – in the Palmyrene relief symbolized by lance and shield (fig. 1,a). The natures and functions of the two gods have been given literary expression in a treatise composed in honour of the sun (Helios) by the Emperor Julian while during 362-363 he stayed in Syrian Antioch on his way to do battle with the Persians under Shapur II. Supported by quotations from the Neoplatonic writer Iamblichos (born in Chalkis in Syria) the sun cult in Syrian Edessa is described as follows:

"The inhabitants of Edessa, a place from time immemorial sacred to Helios, associate with him Monimos and Azizos. Iamblichos, from whom I have taken this and all besides, a little from a great store, says that the secret meaning to be interpreted is that Monimos is Hermes and Azizos Ares, the assessors of Helios... Now I am aware that Ares, who is called Azizos by the Syrians who inhabit Edessa, goes before Helios in procession"[33].

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31. The inscriptions described in detail in Drijvers (1980) 170-174, cf. also Domaszewski (1895) 64-65, and Drijvers (1981) 246-247.
32. Cf. Nielsen (1936) 61: "In Arabien reist man gewöhnlich abends oder während der Nacht, und dann ist für Karavanen und wandernden Beduinen...der leuchtende Abendstern ein schützender Führer in der Wüste, die Zeit kurz vor Morgendämmerung, wenn der Morgenstern aufgeht, aber bevor sein Licht im Glanz der Sonne verschwindet, ist in der arabischen Wüste die Zeit des Angriffes, die Zeit der Schlacht."
33. See for details of the text *IV Oratio*: Drijvers (1980) 147-151 (whose translation has been followed here), and Tubach (1986) 63-69, who also quotes from

The name "Monimos" is the Greek rendering of the name of the god Mun'îm which, stemming from common Semitic *n'm*: "merciful, gracious" means "the one who shows mercy, favour" and whose existence as a Palmyrene god we have known of since 1972 from a relief, referred to above, dated to AD 138, depicting a lance-carrying horseman (fig. 15). As already asserted by the editor of the relief, J. Starcky, the meanings of the names imply that Mun'îm is none other than 'Arṣû, who was thus worshipped in Edessa under the name Monimos, side by side with Azizos[34].

As appears from the Julian and Iamblichos quotation, Azizos is identified with Ares in Edessa, while Ares in the two previously mentioned inscriptions from Palmyra renders the name 'Arṣû. In both places the identification of Ares with Azizos and 'Arṣû respectively is of course due to the martial or military functions of the three gods – to which must presumably be added – as far as 'Arṣû is concerned – homophony with the name Ares[35]. More striking at the first blush is the identification of the Edessa Monimos *alias* 'Arṣû with Hermes (Mercury). But rather than an expression of the vagueness that western sources may show in Hellenistic times when Oriental deities are to be accounted for[36], the Monimos/'Arṣû identification with Hermes (Mercury) may be due to Hermes's well-known function as a guardian and protector, not least of the cattle – an exact parallel to 'Arṣû as the camel-riding god who conducts and protects the caravans and the cattle in the course of the often dangerous journeys through the Syrian desert. That people in Palmyra, too, realized that 'Arṣû shared this protective function with Hermes-Mercury is proved by the Palmyrene tessera RTP, 174: face a shows what is presumably

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Bardesanes: Liber legum religionum, referring to the *planet* Mars in Edessa as "Ares 'Azîzâ". – There is absolutely no reason – a position held by several scholars – for changing the name Edessa to Emesa, cf. Drijvers (1980) 147-149.

34. See note 12 *supra*, the last-mentioned relief there. The inscription (PAT 2625), found in the Palmyrène, is Greco-Palmyrene, but unfortunately the very fragmentary Greek part of the god's name is missing. – On the same form of the name Mun'îm, but as a personal name of the dedicator in the votive inscription to 'Azîzû see note 10 *supra*.
35. As proposed for instance by Gawlikowski (1990) 2621-2622.
36. In Palmyra Allat is normally identified with Athene, but in a Greek inscription dated to 7-6 BC from the Allat temple Allat is expressly referred to as Artemis, see Kaizer (2002) 103-104.

'Arṣû standing, wearing helmet, tunic and cuirass, carrying a lance in his right hand, with a shield under his arm; on face b Hermes is seen with a helmet decked out with two small wings, in his left hand the wand (*caduceus*), in his right a purse; on the left is a loaded camel. For a long time very few copies of this tessera were known, but in the course of the archaeological examinations of the neighbourhood of the 'Arṣû temple 120 additional ones were found[37]. On the basis of this iconographical connection between 'Arṣû and Hermes (Mercury) it would, however, be rash to assume that the two gods were viewed as identical in Palmyra. For what speaks against this is partly the fact that the name Hermes as such does not at all appear in Palmyra[38], partly the fact that Hermes-Mercury like Ares-'Arṣû is seen in the previously mentioned ceiling decoration in Thalamos Nord in the Bel temple, where the bust of Hermes with his wand is placed diagonally to Ares-'Arṣû[39]. The connection between 'Arṣû – Ares and Hermes-Mercury, which besides on the tesserae just mentioned is also suggested on RTP, 170 and RTP, 182 where 'Arṣû wears a winged helmet[40], demonstrates, rather than an identity with Hermes, that this god's well-known function as guardian and protector is as characteristic of 'Arṣû in his capacity as caravan protector. This function tallies well with the possible interpretation of the title which we saw above is attributed to 'Arṣû on the two tesserae mentioned: "the one who guards"[41].

As we have seen, the two astral deities 'Azîzû-Azizos and 'Arṣû-Monimos appear together in Palmyra and Edessa, in the latter place characterized as the morning and evening star and therefore to be compared with the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux. A relief from the neighbourhood of Emesa showing an eagle under whose wings stand two youths dressed in the same way is taken by H. J. W.

37. Gawlikowski (1987) 337, nos. 72-73; Kaizer (2002) 123 and note 299, cf. note 146 *infra.*
38. Cf. Kaizer (2002) 123; cf. also the observations in Dirven (1999) 95-96 and note 143.
39. See the references in note 30 *supra.*
40. Cf. p. 8 and fig. 9; Kaizer (2002) 124 and note 303.
41. Cf. note 16 *supra*; for the discussion of Monimos – 'Arṣû and Hermes see Drijvers (1980) 150-169.

Drijvers to illustrate Azizos and Monimos escorting the sun, represented by the eagle[42].

That they were actually considered to be local Syrian variants of the Dioscuri can probably be concluded from some inscriptions from Khirbet Semrine, northwest of Palmyra. This locality was a place of worship for several of the less prominent deities, often with Arabic names, and like 'Azîzû-'Arṣû invoked in pairs, for instance Abgal-Ashar, Ma'an-Sha'ar and Shalman-Abgal[43]; besides, it is characteristic that they are often invoked under the title *gny*', which is Arabic *djinnayya*, derived from *djinn*, which originally means "demon", but which in the Palmyrene inscriptions is synonymous with Aramaic *'lh* ', "god"[44]. They are often called "good and rewarding deities (*(gny')*" – as emphasized by J. Starcky – a designation characteristic of steppe and desert deities[45], and it is exactly as such steppe gods that they appear iconographically in reliefs from their small local places of worship in the Palmyrène. But 'Arṣû's previously mentioned special position, indicated by his Roman military costume, also appears where he is depicted among the local steppe deities, thus in a relief from Umm as-Salabikh near Aleppo (fig. 16)[46].

Thus from Khirbet Semrine, whose most prominent god according to the inscriptions seems to be Abgal, we know a relief fragment showing the upper part of a helmeted figure carrying a

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42. Drijvers (1981) 257 with pl. II, 2, cf. LIMC, s.v. Azizos, no. 7. For a similar relief from the Suweidâ area see p. 31-32 and note 53 *infra*.
43. On the gods often invoked in pairs, principally in the Palmyrène, see PNO, p. 146; 154 and 158 respectively.
44. See Schlumberger, PNO, 135-137, *idem*, (1970-71) 209-222, and Starcky (1976) 319-330. Both point out that *gny*'is not derived from Latin *genius*, which does not, however, prevent them from rendering it in French by "génie"!
45. Starcky (1976) 329. – In pre-Islamic Arabian religion the *djinn* could appear as friendly powers, but were mainly seen as dangerous; they were to be found in deserts and other uninhabited places and played their tricks by night, *but vanished with the appearance of the morning star*, cf. Wellhausen (1897) 148-152.
46. Cf. Linant de Bellefonds (1990) 169-174 and pl. III-IV. – The relief from Umm as-Salabikh (fig. 16), whose fragmentary inscription refers to several steppe gods (PAT 2757), among whom two, dressed in local costume, are seen as numbers two and three from the left, followed by 'Arṣû in military costume, cf. Drijvers (1976) 11; pl. 9,2; Gawlikowski (1990) 2638; Linant de Bellefonds (1990) 171-172; pl. VIII,1.

lance and a shield; above, to the right of the head can be read the inscription "Abgal" and to the left of this "'Azîzû", whose figure is absent from the relief[47]. Another fragmentary relief from Khirbet Semrine, but perhaps imported, shows a horseman and in the bottom right corner the remnants of a Greek inscription containing the letters T Ω P, undoubtedly to be restored as the Greek form of the name Castor[48]. Even if Castor might here be thought to refer to Abgal, it will be most natural, considering the previously mentioned Azizos and Monimos cult in Edessa and the repeatedly mentioned Palmyrene relief with 'Azîzû on horseback, to assume that the Castor of the Semrine relief depicts 'Azîzû[49]. This assumption can be further confirmed by the fact that 'Azîzû as a male astral god has his female variant in the well-known north Arabian goddess for the *morning* star: al-'Uzzâ, whose name is the Arabic feminine form of masculine 'Azîz(û)[50]. With 'Azîzû as Castor in Semrine it follows from the combination 'Azîzû-'Arṣû in Palmyra that the latter represents the evening star *alias* Pollux. Like the other paired constellations mentioned in which Abgal figures, 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû with their military equipment thus belong among the steppe or desert deities who "répondent au danger permanent qui a de tout temps obsédé l'habitant des steppes. Où que se soit, de jour comme de nuit, la surprise et le razzia guettent les caravans, les groupes en migration, les voyageurs isolés"[51].

47) PNO, p. 58, no. 13; pl. 23, 4; LIMC, s.v. Dioskouroi (orient.), no. 17*.

48) PNO, p. 56, no. 17; pl. 21, 4. On the provenance of the relief see Seyrig (1949) 236-237.

49. Concerning the identities of the two gods in the reliefs mentioned cf. the reflections in Seyrig (1949) 236, and (1970) 81, Gawlikowski (1974) 77, and Linant de Bellefonds (1990) 170-171.

50. For the names 'Uzzâ and 'Azîz cf. Ryckmans (1934) I, 26; for the character of the two deities cf. Drijvers (1980) 160-161; Heimpel (1982) 18-20, and Henninger (1976) 135-136.

51. See the quotation in Seyrig (1970) 82-83.

Fig. 1,a: Bas-relief of 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû; AD 273. National Museum of Damascus, 164 (248). PAT 0320 = CIS II, 3974.

Fig. 1,b: Bas-relief of 'Azîz, with dedication. Museum of Palmyra, CD 101/60.



Fig. 2: Relief of 'Arṣû, from the temple of Zeus Megistos, Dura Europos. Yale University Art Gallery, 1938.5311. PAT 1113.

Fig. 3: Bas-relief of 'Arṣû, from Khirbet as-Souane. National Museum of Damascus, 5247.

Fig. 4: Relief of 'Arṣû, from the temple of Adonis, Dura Europos. Yale University Art Gallery. LIMC, s.v. Arṣû, no. 3*.



Fig. 5: Camel-rider, probably 'Arṣû; tessera from Palmyra: RTP, 177, face a.



Fig. 6: A loaded camel, above which is the name "Arṣû". RTP, 184, face a.



Fig. 7: RTP, 176, face a: standing camel; face b: inscription, mentioning 'Arṣû.



Fig. 8: RTP, 175, face a: bust of a helmeted warrior with a halo round his head, between two standards, each carrying a standing figure wearing a cuirass; face b: inscription, mentioning ’Arṣû.



Fig. 9: RTP, 170, face a: 'Arṣû wearing a cuirass and a plumed helmet, and armed with lance and shield.



Fig. 10: RTP, 178, face a: Incense offering, given to a standing camel, probably symbolizing 'Arṣû.



Fig. 11: RTP, 196, face a: ’Arṣû with shield and lance; inscription: “’Arṣû is great“.



Fig. 12: RTP, 197, face a: 'Arṣû wearing a cuirass, leaning his right hand on a lance, in his left hand a sword; inscription: "'Arṣû Bel".



Fig. 13: The triad of Bel, and 'Arṣû; bas-relief from the temple of Bel, Palmyra; first century AD. Museum of Palmyra, 1221.

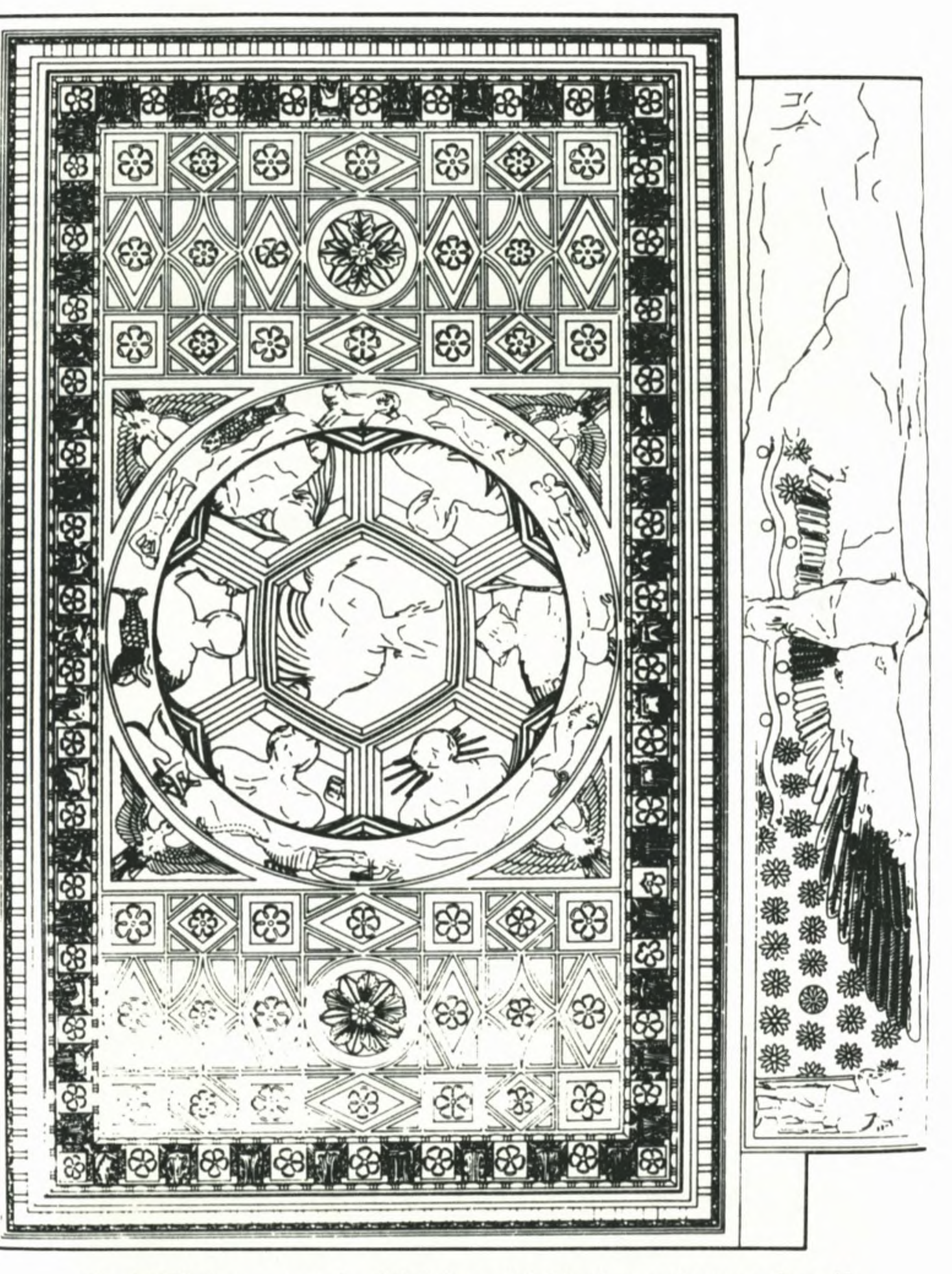


Fig. 14: Thalamos, temple of Bel: bust of Bel-Jupiter as the central motif, surrounded by six busts, representing six planets, among them Ares/ 'Arṣû (above Bel-Jupiter).

Fig. 15: Bas-relief dedicated to Mun'îm; AD 138. H. Pharaon collection, Beirut. Photo J. Starcky.

Fig. 16: Bas-relief from 'Umm as-Salabikh, AD 225. National Museum of Damascus, 2118 (4480); in the middle 'Arṣû with shield, together with local steppe deities.

2. ’Arṣû – ‘Azîzû and related Gods in the Nabataean-Arabian and South Arabian Area

In the areas south and southwest of Palmyra and the Palmyrène, more particularly in Haurân and in Syrian Decapolis, we also find traces of the cult of ‘Azîzû -Azizos and ’Arṣû-Monimos. In an altar of black basalt stone, found in Suweidâ about 100 km southeast of Damascus, the relief of the front shows an eagle with spread wings standing over a masculine bust; on the back of the altar is seen a corresponding bust. At the top of the altar is seen a broad border continuing round the four sides with the inscription “Thaimos made (the altar) for Azizos”, who is depicted near the bust under the eagle; on the other hand it is doubtful whether the bust on the back is the dedicator or depicts ’Arṣû-Monimos. From the valley near Beit Shean (in Hellenistic times belonging to Decapolis) another Greek inscription is known, dedicated to Azizos “for the salvation of the Lord Emperors”, and from the neighbourhood of Gadara Decapolitana (Umm Qês) a basalt relief with a horseman standing by his horse probably depicts Azizos[52]. A relief from Mes‘ad south of Suweidâ shows at the top an eagle under whose spread wings are seen two small busts of youths, naked and each holding a bunch of grapes. According to M. Dunand the subject can be interpreted either as a funereal relief or as a votive relief representing the sun, symbolized by the eagle that is accompanied by the Dioscuri *alias* Azizos and Monimos. In favour of the latter interpretation, which Dunand finds most probable, speaks the abovementioned relief from the neighbourhood of Emesa with

52. Dunand (1934) 18, no. 8 and pl. IX, 8, cf. LIMC, s.v. Azizos, no. 5; Dunand assumes that the bust on the back of the altar is the dedicator, while Dussaud (1903) 14 conjectures that rather than the dedicator it depicts Monimos. – For the inscription from Beit Shean (Scytopolis) that can be dated to the period from Marcus Aurelius (161-180) to Diocletian (282-305): Ovadiah-Roll (1988) 177-180 and Weber (2002) 214; the basalt relief from ‘Adasiyâ near Gadara: Weber (1995) 203-206, pl. 29, a.

the same subject[53]. The bunch of grapes as an attribute is after all well known first of all in the Dionysos cult and is also known in Haurân as an attribute of the Nabataean Dushares *alias* Dionysos. Thus in the time of the Roman empire the town of Suweidâ was considered to have been founded by Dionysos and was given the name Dionysias[54]. The bunch of grapes is, however, also known as an attribute of the Dioscuri on coins from Tripolis in Syria; these coins, struck under the Emperor Caracalla (198-217), have indeed been related by F. Chapouthier to the Mes'ad relief as illustrating the evening and morning star *alias* 'Azîzû and Monimos-'Arṣû in their capacity as the companions of the sun god[55]. The relationship between wine and the Dioscuri which has thus manifested itself within the Syrian-Nabataean area will come up for renewed discussion in connection with an account of 'Arṣû's and 'Azîzû's roots in Syrian religion in the pre-Hellenistic age.

As companions of both sun and moon one finds the Dioscuri Phosphorus and Hesperus in a bas-relief from 'Irê (Aere) in southern Haurân: on the left of the relief is seen the sun god (Helios), on the right the moon goddess (Selene), both carrying a torch. In the centre there are two small busts, on the left a bearded face, on the right a helmeted head; over both of them there is a festoon. J. Dentzer-Feydy observes that the busts appear as atypical and without attributes[56]. To this it can be added, however, that the right-hand bust has the helmet as martial equipment in common with 'Arṣû as he is known from Palmyra and the Palmyrène. Fairly unusual in the relief is the torch as the attribute of the sun and moon deities; it is normally carried by the Dioscuri as those who bring out and take away the light of the sun; that is indeed the manner in which Azizos-Phosphorus and Monimos-Hesperus are depicted in a relief from Suweidâ, where again we note the eagle with spread wings, here accompanied by two small

53. Dunand (1934) 33-34, no. 38, *bis*, pl. XIV, endorsed by Sourdel (1952) 75. – For the highly similar relief from the Homs area cf. p. 14-15 and note 42 *supra*.

54. For Dushares-Dionysos cf. Sourdel (1952) 61-65; on the bunch of grapes as an attribute of Dushares see Sourdel, p. 63-64; Zayadine (1997) 115-116, and Healey (2001) 100-101, the latter, however, expressing some reservation towards Sourdel and Zayadine. For Suweidâ as founded by Dionysos and the name Dionysias see Dentzer-Feydy (1991) 32; Sourdel, loc. cit. – On Dushares-Dionysos see further pp. 38-40 *infra*.

55. Charpouthier (1936) 60-61 (nos. 48-49); p. 236 and 276-277.

winged youths, the left one raising the torch, the right one lowering it[57].

As mentioned in the first section, 'Arṣû is identified with Ares in Palmyra, both epigraphically and iconographically. It is also true of the most prominent of the Nabataean gods, Dushares, that he is locally identified with or at least put on the same footing as Ares. Of Dushares it is stated in the Byzantine lexicographical work Suda from the tenth century:

"Theus-Ares (i. e. Dousares): this is the god Ares in Petra of Arabia. The god Ares is worshipped among them, for they honour him especially. The image is a black stone, square, unshaped *(atypótos)*"[58], and this identification or combination is further confirmed by the fact that Dushares in Bostra is identified with the local god A'ra, a form that Greek inscriptions in that place render by *Arras* which – as was the case with 'Arṣû in Palmyra (cf. p. 5-6 *supra*) – is phonetically close to the name of the god Ares[59]. Indeed the latter forms part of the Greek name of the ancient Moabite town of Rabbat-Moab (Moba) in Hellenistic times: Areopolis, and on coins from the time of the Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) and up to and including the Emperor Geta (209-212) there is seen the depiction of a standing warrior with sword and shield and wearing helmet and cuirass; some of the coins contain the inscription *Theos Ares* – in other words the same type as 'Arṣû on the Palmyrene tesserae[60]. In this period the name of the town is either the original "Rabbat Moba" or the new Greek name "Areopolis". However, some of the coins from the reign of the following Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) have instead the name "Arsapolis", which has been considered an error for "Are-

56. Dentzer-Feydy (1997) 44 and fig. 14, cf. Sourdel (1952) 29; the relief is reproduced pl. II, 1, but its three fragments have here been incorrectly combined.
57. Dunand (1934) 33, no. 38 and pl. XII, 38.
58. Cf. Healey (2001) 96.
59. See Healey (2001) 96-99, cf. Starcky (1966) 988-992, who emphasizes (p. 992) that the identification with Ares is a local and occasional phenomenon, which is also shown by a jasper gem with the Greek inscription: "Ares, Theandros, Dousares" (finding place unknown), see Bowersock (1986, reprint 1994) 237-241, who assumes that Ares represents 'Arṣû.
60. For Areopolis-Rabbat-Moba (Moab) see Spijkerman (1978) 262-263; for the coins from Septimius Severus up till and including Geta with the picture of Ares, some also with his name, see *id.*, p. 265-273 and pl. 59-61.

opolis"[61]. But E. A. Knauf, endorsed by G. W. Bowersock, considers "'Arṣa" to be a rendering of "'Arṣû", where the final vowel *û* has been replaced by the vowel *a*, a spelling that is well known from Greek renderings of Palmyrene personal names of which the god's name forms part (62), and which is besides known with a corresponding rendering of the god's name from a Palmyrene inscription from Dura Europos[63].

If we venture to conclude from the abovementioned epigraphical and numismatic material that Ares-'Arṣû and 'Azîzû were known in Nabataean Haurân, we thus find Ares-'Arṣû in the same form in which he appears in Palmyra and the Palmyrène: a weapon-carrying warrior, wearing cuirass and helmet. On this background it will be natural to assume that the examples of a camel-riding god that are known in the Haurân area – as has been stated by G. W. Bowersock – probably also relate to 'Arṣû-Ares rather than to Dushares. And as in Rabbat-Moab, it is from the numismatic material, now in Bostra in northern Haurân, about 160 km southeast of Damascus, that the relevant examples stem. Thus the reverse of a coin struck during the reign of Elagabalus shows a figure with the right hand raised, riding on a camel, and with a Greek inscription: ΘΕΟ ΚΑΝΙ, which can be interpreted as *theos kai nikatór*, i. e. "God and Conqueror"[64]. The same subject, only here with two camels, the nearest one of which carries a rider with the same posture as on the first-mentioned one is seen on a coin that A. Kindler terms "quasi-autonomous", and which can be dated to as early as AD 126[65]. Kindler interprets both coins as depictions of Dushares, but yet states that such a depiction of Dushares is not known elsewhere[66]; the fact that a Nabataean inscription mentions two camel statuettes (of metal?) as votive

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61. Ares on the Elagabalus coins with the name of the town of Arsapolis: see Spijkerman (1978) 274-275, no. 36, pl. 61; the same form of the name also on contemporary coins with other names and figures of gods: Spijkerman, loc. cit.
62. Knauf (1984) 353-356; Bowersock (1983, reprint 1994) 233-234; *id.* (1986, repr. 1994) 240, note 11; *id.* (1990) 33 and note 15.
63. Dirven (1999) 334, no. 75, and PAT, 1068. – From Dura Europos we besides know an abbreviated form of 'Arṣû, without a prosthetic *'Alef*, see Dirven, op. cit. 307, no. 50, and PAT, 1081.
64. Kindler (1983) 117, no. 34; pl. III, and pp. 53; 80 on the Greek text.
65. Kindler (1983) 105, no. 1, pl. I.
66. Kindler (1983) 53.

offerings to Dushares hardly proves that the depiction on these coins of a camel-riding person suggests Dushares[67]. As emphasized by Bowersock, the camel-riding god tallies completely with 'Arṣû as we know him from the Palmyrene tesserae and the previously mentioned relief showing 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû[68]. And just as in the case of the examples of the previously mentioned tesserae, with or without 'Arṣû's name, and with a standing camel without a rider, so in Bostra also the coins that on the reverse show a camel walking towards the right (without a rider) must be considered probable depictions of 'Arṣû-Ares[69]; incidentally, to the latter is dedicated a Greek inscription from al-Qanawât, a short distance northeast of Suweidâ, and about 40 km north of Bostra[70].

Yet another numismatic example of a camel-riding god is worth mentioning, of even older date than those referred to above. In connection with Dushares and another Arabian god, Shay' al-Qawm, E. A. Knauf mentions a coin from the town of Gaza showing a riding figure flourishing a lance.In front is seen an incense burner, which according to Knauf shows "that the rider is a god and not a human being". Belonging as it does to "the Philisto-Arabian" coinage, the coin can be dated to the fourth century BC, and as Knauf justly observes, the lance-flourishing camel-rider necessarily suggests the Palmyrene 'Arṣû or the god Ruḍâ[71]. As was established long ago, Ruḍâ – as to both name and function – is identical with, or at least a north Arabian variant of,

67. Thus Kindler (1983) 60, concurring with Morey (1911) 79, who refers to CIS II, 157, mentioning two camel statuettes as votive offerings to Dushares. – It does not either seem reasonable to assume, with Kindler, pp. 44, 60, that the camel-rider on the two coins mentioned or the camel without a rider on the coins referred to below (note 68) is a personification of the Province of Arabia; it is true that such an employment of the camel topic is known in Bostra about AD 115 (the Emperor Trajan's day), cf. Kindler, pp. 96-99; pl. VI, 10-13, but as Kindler himself observes, this type of camel is two-humped (*camelus bactrianus*) unlike the one-humped camel (*camelus dromedarius*) on the coins that presumably depict Ares – 'Arṣû.

68. Bowersock (1990) 32-35, cf. id. (1986, repr.. 1994) 19, note 10.

69. Kindler (1983) 106, no. 5; p. 109, no. 14; p. 111, nos. 19 and 21, struck during the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Commodus.

70. Bowersock (1990) 32, cf. Sourdel (1952) 77. The finder of this inscription, R. Dussaud, relates Ares to "the Palmyrene Ares" (i. e. 'Arṣû), see Dussaud (1903) 246, no. 20.

71. Knauf (1990) 179-180, cf. id. (1985) 19-28, especially 22-24 with fig. 2.

'Arṣû, and will therefore in what follows be subjected to a detailed discussion in order for further light to be shed on the Palmyrene god.

The first time the North Arabian god Ruḍâ is mentioned is in Assyrian annals from King Asarhaddon's age (680-669 BC), where under the name *Ru-ul-da-a-a-u* he is referred to as one of six "gods from the land of the Arabs", whom Asarhaddon had led back to Dumah (al-Djawf) in northern Arabia, after his father Sancherib had earlier taken them to Assyria[72]. The knowledge of the Assyrian form of the name, rendering Arabic Rulḍâw, has confirmed that the god, Orotalt – in Herodotus (fifth century BC) mentioned together with the goddess Alilat-Urania as the only known Arabian deities – is identical with Ruḍâ[73]. It is somewhat doubtful whether this deity was masculine or feminine, but it is most probable that Ruḍâ mainly appeared as a god, and only sporadically as a goddess. According to S. Krone, the reference in Herodotus (*Historia* III, 8) to the god Orotalt also points to the likelihood that Ruḍâ was mainly known as masculine. The most natural explanation is probably that Ruḍâ – as is true of the common Semitic 'Athtar – was originally an androgynous deity, who by virtue of his astral character represented both the morning and the evening star[74]. However, as a masculine god Ruḍâ has a prominent position in Thamudic inscriptions from the north Arabian area round Dumah, Taymâ and Sakkaka, and in Safaitic inscriptions from southern Syria and eastern north Arabia; his name is given in the forms *Rḍw, Rḍy, Rḍ, Rḍh* and *Rḍ'*[75]. He is known from

72. See Krone (1992) 76-77; Knauf (1989) 81-86, and Retsö (2003) 601.
73. Borger (1957) 8-11; Healey (2001) 94, and Knauf (1989) 85.
74. See the discussion in Krone (1992) 448-454; she inclines to the view that Ruḍâ was masculine (even though in Ibn Kalbî, Kitâb al-aṣnâm Ruḍâ is referred to as being a goddess), but agreeing with Winnett-Reed (1970) 75-76 she weighs the possibility that Ruḍâ was a bisexual (androgynous) deity representing the morning and evening star. For a similar function of 'Athtar-Ishtar, in older Semitic religion as masculine representing the morning star, as feminine the evening star, cf. Caquot (1958) 49, and Henninger (1976) 134, 143; 150-151; see further *infra*, pp. 41-42.
75. Winnett-Reed (1970) 75-76; Krone (1992) 441-446; on the varying forms of the name, ibid., p. 441; as to the form *Rḍ'* it may be observed here that it also appears in Dura Europos, used to refer to 'Arṣû; see Dirven (1999) 207-308 (PAT, 1081).

inscriptions right down to the third century AD and may thus be characterized "as the most vital of the six gods from Dumah"[76].

The similarity – or rather the identity – between 'Arṣû and Ruḍâ comprises more than the Semitic root and meaning of the name itself. From the Thamudic inscriptions it appears that Ruḍâ, like 'Arṣû, is a god who accompanies the traveller and protects his cattle: "O, Ruḍâ, thou must ensure my safe return!" as one inscription has it. Another says: "O, Ruḍâ, in thee there is protection for the small cattle". In several inscriptions somebody implores his help and protection[77]. He is also invoked as the protector of an entire clan or tribe, or a tribe invokes him for revenge, or praises him for a victory[78] – examples that reveal him as a warlike god like the Palmyrene 'Arṣû. And in fine agreement with the meaning of his name people approach Ruḍâ for help, mercy and friendship[79].

It is characteristic of Ruḍâ in north Arabia as well as of 'Arṣû in Palmyra *alias* Monimos in Edessa that they are astral deities. Ruḍâ's role as an astral god appears iconographically from a Safaitic inscription where Ruḍâ's name is engraved round a primitively drawn star figure[80]. In an often quoted inscription in which Ruḍâ is invoked there is seen the drawing of a standing female figure over whose left shoulder there is a star (fig. 16); this inscription and this drawing have become elements in the discussion about whether Ruḍâ is masculine or feminine; but provided that this type of figure (incidentally known from other Safaitic inscriptions) depicts Ruḍâ, it illustrates the astral character of the god in both cases[81]. To sum up, then, Ruḍâ appears as a deity – *male or female* – whose functions as a protector of individuals, clans and their property (cattle) and whose character of being an astral

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76. Retsö (2003) 601.
77. van den Branden (1950) 508; 60 ("retour"; "petit bétail"); more generally, see the survey in van den Branden, p. 13.
78. van den Branden (1950) 95; 114; 167-170; 220; 328.
79. van den Branden (1950) 64; 181; 245; 364 (expressed through the personal name *Rḍhn).*
80. CIS V, 1077 and tab. XV, 397, cf. Winnett-Reed (1970) 75, note 22; Dussaud (1955) 143, note 1.
81. See Dussaud (1955) 143, fig. 20 = CIS V, 4351 with p. 98 *bis*; for the discussion concerning the relation of the figure to Ruḍâ and a reference to other examples of similar figures see Winnett-Reed (1970) 75, and Jamme (1972) 16-21; the latter interprets the figure as a female dancer and incidentally completely rejects the idea of Ruḍâ being a goddess.

deity make him the north Arabian equivalent of the Palmyrene 'Arṣû[82].

While within the Nabataean area we know only a single, previously mentioned inscription that refers to the god Azizos, whose name may besides have been preserved in a locality south of Hebron[83], both 'Arṣû's and Ruḍâ's names are apparently quite unknown in the Nabataean epigraphical material. But we have seen that in the iconographical material from south Haurân 'Azîzû and 'Arṣû are depicted as the morning and evening star, or Phosphorus and Hesperus. To this should now be added, as important literary testimony concerning 'Arṣû *alias* Ruḍâ, Herodotus's comment (*Historia* III, 8) on the religion of the Arabs as he knew it from his journey through the eastern delta of the Nile, thus relating to the area between Egypt and southern Palestine[84]. The often quoted passage is as follows: "They deem no other to be gods save Dionysos and Urania; and they say that the cropping of their hair is like the cropping of the hair of Dionysos, cutting it round the head and shaving the temples. They call Dionysos Orotalt, and Urania Alilat" (transl. Loeb edition).

If we take our point of departure in the circumstance that Orotalt = Ruḍâ is here identified with Dionysos and is co-ordinated with Urania, referred to by Herodotus at I, 131 as Aphrodite Urania, we are given an insight into the role played by the astral deities in Nabataean cult and myth, too. And in this context it is the most prominent god among the Nabataeans, Dushares, and his connection with the Dionysos myth that here call for detailed comment.

In antiquity Dushares is associated with Dionysos, both iconographically and in literature. Dushares-Dionysos in Suweidâ has been referred to earlier, and as an iconographical example it may be mentioned that on coins struck in the reign of the Emperor Commodus (180-192) for Bostra Dushares shows Dionysos with the inscription "the Dusares of the Bostrans". The identity

82. Cf. Krone (1992) 449-454.

83. See p. 31 *supra*; as mentioned by Tubach (1986) 66, note 12, there exists an area of ruins, Khirbet 'Aziz, referred to in Jewish sources as Kefar 'Azîz, which may be assumed to have been sacred to 'Azizos. – For 'Arṣû-Ruḍâ being unknown in Nabataean inscriptions see Healey (2001) 94-95.

84. On Herodotus's knowledge about what he terms "the Arabs" and their relation to what was later the Nabataean area see Retsö (2003) 243-250; 602.

between the two gods is later confirmed by the Byzantine lexicographer Hesychius (fifth – sixth centuries): "Dusares: i. e. Dionysos (among) the Nabataeans, says Isidore"[85].

In the ancient Near Eastern myth of the mother goddess giving birth to the child or son of god, exemplified by Osiris-Isis, there is also in the Hellenistic age the idea of the birth of the Dionysos child[86]. For obvious reasons this idea was subjected to a continuing polemic in the Christian patristic literature, as it is expressed by the presbyter and later bishop Epiphanius, born in Eleutheropolis in southern Palestine (fourth century). In his polemical work "Panarion" he describes the annual cultic festival in the solstitial period (December 25-January 6) for Dionysos in Nabataean Petra and Elusa, and in Alexandria; after first having described the festival for the goddess Kore in Alexandria he goes on:

"It also takes place in the same idolatrous manner in Petra, which is the capital of Arabia, which is Edom in the Scriptures; they praise the virgin in Arabic language, calling her in Arabic *khaamou* which means *kore* (young girl) and virgin, and also Dousarês born by her which means the single-born of the Lord. This also takes place in the town of Elusa on the same night as in Petra and Alexandria"[87].

Father Hieronymus (fourth century) in his work "Hilarion's Life" also comments on the cult in Elusa, whose inhabitants "worship her (i. e. Venus) because of Lucifer to whose cult the people of the *Saraceni* are much dedicated"[88]. It is important here that the name of the child of god is said to be Lucifer *alias* Phosphorus; both he and his mother are often referred to in patristic literature – here, just to exemplify, let us mention what John of

85. Cf. Kindler (1983) 80; 110, no. 18; p. 150, note 13 with the Hesychius quotation; Isidore is Isidorus the Alexandrian, cf. Norden (1924) 27. – For further comment on Dushares-Dionysos in ancient literature cf. Sourdel (1952) 62-64; Healey (2001) 99-101.

86. For the myth of the birth of the child of god cf. Norden (1924); in particular on Dusares – Dionysos see p. 27-28.

87. Quoted from Retsö (2001) 602-603. Cf. also Williams (1994) 50-51. The word *chaamou* (variant: *chaabou*) by common consent as it seems is explained as stemming from Arabic *kâ'ib*: "young woman", see Mordtmann (1875) 101-102; Sourdel (1952) 67; but see also Healey (2001) 103-104.

88. PL xxiii. 41-42, §§ 26-27; see also Retsö (2003) 603.

Damascus (born ca. 750) states about "the Saracens", that "they worship and prostrate to the star of dawn (*ho eôsphoros astêr*) and to Aphrodite which in their language means "great""[89]. And in a Byzantine abjuration formula, written in Greek and directed towards Islam, there is the following statement: "I anathematize those who prostrate to the morning star, that is Eôsphoros, and Aphrodite whom they in their language of the *árabes* call *khabar*, that is "great""[90].

On the background of this survey of the Arabian, that is here first and foremost the Nabataean, cult of Dusares-Dionysos, in the sources termed the morning star or Lucifer-Phosphorus, we can establish with Herodotus's Dionysos = Orotalt or Ruḍâ that the latter by virtue of his astral character has gained admittance – but, be it noted, "disguised" as Dionysos-Dushares – in the Arabian-Nabataean area right down to Petra. As was mentioned earlier, Ruḍâ was well known in the northeast Arabian area and in southern Syria, while the name Ruḍâ appears to be unknown among the Nabataeans. Of the cult of Dionysos-Dushares = the morning star Phosphorus in Elusa and Petra it can, however, be asserted – with J. Retsö – that the cult of Orotalt-Ruḍâ in the areas close to southern Syria is associated with 'Arṣû further north in Syria, and that the cult of Ruḍâ among the Arabs makes them share the mythological ideas characteristic of the paired gods Azîzos and 'Arṣû-Monimos. Or to quote Retsö: "The main meeting point between their cult and that of the surrounding society was the figure of Ruḍâ. His identification with Dionysos is the clue to the nature of the cult among the Arabs"[91]. And *in this connection it must be emphasized that Ruḍâ* – as mentioned above – *originally represented both the morning and the evening star* in his capacity as an androgynous god[92].

In view of the attempt to be made later to trace the origin of mythological ideas surrounding 'Azîzû-'Arṣû further back to the older Northwest Semitic world it is important that now we can thus

89. Quoted from Retsö (2003) 603; for the word *chabar*, which is accounted for by reference to Arabic *kabar*, cf.also the variant *Chobar*, the Arabic feminine form of *'Akbar*, i. e. "the greatest", see also Henninger (1981) 84-86; Rotter (1993) 126-127.

90. Quoted from Retsö (2003) 603, cf. also Henninger (1981) 83.

91. Retsö (2003) 606-607.

92. P. 36-37 *supra*, cf. also the observations in Retsö (2003) 605-607.

establish that in the Nabataean area there existed an idea of the child of god, here termed Dushares-Dionysos (*alias* Orotalt-Ruḍâ), borne by the heavenly goddess. A reminder that the idea of the child of god also *explicitly* applied to 'Azîzû/Azizos is found in the previously mentioned Latin inscriptions from Dacia and Algeria, in which Azizos besides being called *deus bonus phosphorus* is also termed *puer*: "the boy child"[93]. An epitaph from Hedjrâ (Madâ'in Ṣâlih) in the southernmost part of the Nabataean area shows that Dushares was associated with the idea of the god as the one who – to quote the inscription – "separates night from day". M. Lidzbarski points out that this formulation indicates precisely the function of the morning and evening star as the companion of the sun when it rises and sets, referring at the same time to Orotalt-Ruḍâ[94].

Whereas Ruḍâ ('Arṣû) is well known in the North Arabian area and we also find him (or his companion 'Azîzû) in the Nabataean material in the form of Dushares-Dionysos-Lucifer-Phosphorus, one searches in vain for Ruḍâ's name in the south Arabian inscriptions[95]. On the other hand the god 'Athtar, whose character and functions correspond to Ruḍâ's in many respects, is well known. Since 'Athtar besides in South Arabia also has a prominent position in the older northwest Semitic religion where we shall later endeavour to trace the religio-historical background of 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû, we shall now have a look at the South Arabian 'Athtar.

'Athtar-Ishtar is the name of the common Semitic deity, known

93. See Drijvers (1980) 170, cf. also Retsö (2003) 6o5 with note 66.

94. The Nabataean epitaph is found in a tomb over whose entrance there is another epitaph that expressly mentions Dushares, see Cantineau (1930-32) 28-31; on the inscription quoted (no. 3 in Cantineau) see Lidzbarski (1909-1915) Bd. 3, 267-269; besides Healey (2001) 93-94, who in this connection mentions the view propounded by J. Starcky that Ruḍâ among the Nabataeans was the original name of Dushares, a circumstance that according to Starcky accounts for the total absence of the name Ruḍâ among the Nabataeans; but this argument might as well – as Healey remarks – be used against Starcky's view. – Knauf (1989) 110-111 sees both Ruḍâ and the god Qôs behind the name Dushares (from Arabic *dhû sharâ*: "the one from Sharâ" with reference to the Edomitic mountain area, the Se'îr of the Old Testament). Both Knauf and Starcky assume that a connection between these names was developed in the course of the Nabataeans' altered conditions of life, the change from a nomadic to a settled existence.

95. Cf. Krone (1992) 444-445.

since the third millennium in north Syria and in Mesopotamia. In his capacity as the god of the morning and evening star 'Athtar represented both what we may call the masculine and the feminine "aspect", and this double character manifests itself in several ways: in the Sumerian religion and its Akkadian successor the Venus star is called Dilbat and Ishtar respectively and as the morning star is considered masculine, as the evening star feminine. In Mari there is a distinction between "the male Ishtar" (*Ishtar USH)* and Ishtar (the goddess), and in Ugarit the god 'Athtart appears side by side with the goddess 'Athtart[96]. On the other hand the Venus star in other Semitic cultures like the south Arabian is exclusively known in the masculine form as 'Athtar. As a – presumably – masculine heavenly god, 'Athtar in north Arabian Dumah is listed under the Aramaic name 'Attarshamâyin together with among others Ruḍâ, an 'Athtar Qurumâ (about this god later) in the abovementioned Assyrian annals from King Asarhaddon's times, and in an Aramaic seal cylinder inscription from as early as the ninth century BC[97]; under the shorter form '*trsm* 'Atar ('Attar) is well known in Thamudic inscriptions from the sixth century BC and later, here often mentioned in conjunction with the goddess al-Lât[98]. But apart from the name itself, which generally indicates that 'Attarshamâyin is a heavenly deity, the North Arabian material contains scant information about his character, compared with the insight provided by the south Arabian inscriptions[99].

96. See the survey in Heimpel (1982) 13-15; cf. also note 73 *supra.* For the Sumerian Dilbat = the Akkadian Ishtar as the morning and evening star see the texts in Plessis (1921) 77, 84; for Ishtar USH in Mari: Bottéro (1958) 41.
97. For the deities mentioned in the Asarhaddon annals see the references in note 71 *supra*; the Aramaic seal inscription: Bordreuil (1986) 75-76, no. 85. If 'Attarshamâyin is a goddess, she is seen depicted on the seal inscription in a sitting position with a star above her crown; it cannot, however, be ruled out that the Aramaic inscription is a later addition to the seal stamped by the neo-Assyrian style, cf. Bordreuil, l. c., note 8. – On the discussion concerning 'Attarshamâyin being a masculine or feminine deity see Knauf (1989) 82-83; Krone (1992) 79-82; Retsö (2003) 601-602, who argues in favour of 'Attarshamâyin being feminine, while Lipinski (2000) 607-610 considers the deity to be masculine. The goddess on the Aramaic seal inscription must in that case be his companion; Lipinski suggests the south Arabian goddess *Hbs.*
98. Cf. Krone (1992) 82-83.
99. See the survey in van den Branden (1966) 109-110; here 'Attarshamâyin is seen to have been invoked as a healing deity.

Among the many names of ‘Athtar, known throughout the south Arabian area, is ‘Athtar Sharqân: “the ‘Athtar of the East”, which points to ‘Athtar as the god of the sunrise. As remarked by A. Jamme, the verb *shrq* besides meaning “to rise” (of the sun) also means “to cleave, divide into two”, which Jamme applies to the function of separating light from dark[100]; in this sense it corresponds to the Nabataean epitaph already mentioned that refers to Dushares as “the one who separates day from night”[101]. And if *ghrbn*: “the West, the Western one”, which in a Sabaean building inscription is connected with *‘thtr shrqn*, is a corresponding title of ‘Athtar, we have with “the ‘Athtar of the East and the ‘Athtar of the West” a clear expression of ‘Athtar who “marque les deux stades opposés de Vénus”, i. e. ‘Athtar (Venus) as both the f (Phosphorus) and the evening star (Hesperus)[102]. In other words: with his astral function ‘Athtar exactly represents the doubleness that in the more northerly Semitic cultures is conveyed either through hermaphroditism (as we saw with Ruḍâ) or through a division into an ‘Athtar and an ‘Athtarte, and which in the south Arabian material is sporadically expressed by the so-called *vulva* symbol, connected with ‘Athtar and also with the name Umm ‘Athtar in a single Sabaean inscription – if the meaning of the name is “Mother ‘Athtar”[103].

With ‘Athtar’s function as the one who forcefully brings forth the dawn it is natural that he should be given the title *shrqn* in inscriptions that invoke his protection against destructive powers, and as such a protective and martial god a number of Sabaean inscriptions give him the title *’zzm* or *’zzn*: “the strong, powerful one”[104], corresponding to the name ‘Azîzû/Azizos, the previously

100. See the references to the Hadramawtic, Minaean, Qataban and Sabaean inscriptions: Jamme (1947) 88; on the meaning of *shrq*, ibid., note 249.

101. See p. 41 and note 94 *supra*.

102. CIS IV, 149, with the text restored by Jamme (1947) 88, cf. Smith (1995) 635, but also M. Höfner’s reservation, referred to in Henninger (1976) 133, note 16.

103. The *vulva* symbol: Grohmann (1914) 51; Höfner (1965) 549; ’Umm‘Athtar in CIS IV, 544 could also be translated “‘Athtar’s Mother”, see Höfner (1965) 547-548, who also refers to the names *‘thtr ’Ab*: “‘Athtar (is) father”, and *‘thtr ’um*: “‘Athtar (is) mother” in Ugarit.

104. Höfner (1965) 498; ead. (1970) 244-245; 257; 290; Smith (1995) 635; Jamme (1962) 30; id. (1947) 89, where other titles are adduced, indicating ‘Athtar as a martial protector.

mentioned companion of 'Arṣû-Monimos[105]. And 'Athtar as the evening star heralding the coolness and refreshing dew of the night is in harmony with his function as the giver of rain and – especially in inscriptions of a later date – the irrigation of the crops[106].

As a warlike god 'Athtar is characterized by the lance or the spearhead, known for instance from the decoration of his shrine in Qarnâwu (Ma'în), confirming his affinity to 'Arṣû, whose attribute – as previously mentioned – was precisely the lance[107]. This symbol of course emphasizes 'Athtar's character as a protective, warlike god, but can also be related to a cultic institution which is a special phenomenon in south Arabian religion, namely the cultic or ritual hunt. Its purpose was, with the delivery of the yield of the hunt as an offering, to ensure the fertility of the country, which is emphasized by the fact that it was especially the rulers of the country, in ancient times the so-called *mukarrib*, who were the hunters, in later times the king; a similar ritual is known from Ethiopic ritual hunts which, however, only took place in connection with the enthronement of the kings[108]. From a Sabaean inscription it appears that cultic hunting could be practised on behalf of an "'Athtar clan" (*'hl 'thtr*), a designation which is besides noteworthy by also appearing in King Asarhaddon's previously mentioned annals, where it is associated with Attarshamâyin in Dumah (*LU a'lu sha D Atarsamain*)[109]. Not less interesting in the same passage of the Asarhaddon text is the name of the god 'Attar Qurumâ, where Assyrian *qurûma* renders south Arabic *krwm*, which in several inscriptions forms part of the account of the

105. Cf. Drijvers (1980) 151-152, and p. 6; 12 *supra*.

106. Cf. Henninger (1976) 133 and the comments on 'Arṣû, 12 *supra*. 'Athtar as the god of rain and irrigation: Jamme (1947) 89; Ryckmans (1951) 62; Höfner (1965) 498-499; *ead.* (1970) 268-270; 290-291, Smith (1995) 635-636.

107. Cf. Höfner (1965) 535; *ead.* (1970) 308-309 and fig. 9; Ryckmans (1976) 280-284, and for other examples Grohmann (1913) 48.

108. Texts describing cultic or ritual hunting: see Beeston (1948) 183-196; Ryckmans (1957) 109-112, and the survey in Höfner (1970) 331-333, who also (note 227) discusses its possible connection with the Ethiopic rite. For the purpose underlying south Arabian cultic hunting see Ryckmans (1976) 259-263; that cultic hunting could also be practised by others than the ruler is shown in CIS IV, 571, see Beeston, op. cit., 187.

109. See Smith (1995) 633-634; Knauf (1989) 81-86.

cultic "hunt for 'Athtar and for Kurûm" (*ṣyd 'thtr wkrwm)*[110]. Unfortunately the meaning of *krwm* has not been clarified, but according to W. W. Müller translations like "noble, generous" or "fertility-donating rain" or "averting evil" should be relevant – the two last ones must be said to be related to 'Athtar as fertility-giver and protector. According to Müller it is also doubtful whether 'Athtar and Kurûm are one and the same god or two manifestations of 'Athtar[111]; however, in favour of the latter interpretation speaks the list of gods in the Asarhaddon text, where they are enumerated separately.

The ritual hunt for 'Athtar has no immediate parallels in either the Palmyrene or the Nabataean – Arabian material, which is concerned with the related deities 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû. In Dura Europos, however, we find 'Arṣû together with Bel, Yarḥibôl and 'Aglibôl in an inscription in connection with a hunting scene[112]. And later, in dealing with the Ugaritic material, we shall return to what might be called "the hunting topic".

As the one who in his capacity as the morning star heralds the dawn and the rising sun, 'Athtar appears in a number of Sabaean inscriptions in connection with the name Saḥar, the common Semitic designation of daybreak or dawn[113]. Saḥar is mentioned for the first time about 260 BC in an inscription from Ma'rib together with the moon and "state" god Almaqah and Hawbas in connection with a victory over Qatabân[114]; iconographically, too, Saḥar appears with 'Athtar and Almaqah in an inscription that explicitly refers to 'Athtar and Saḥar[115]. But most frequently Saḥar is mentioned with 'Athtar in the formula "'Athtar and Saḥar" (*'thtr wsḥr*), where Saḥar is more naturally to be understood as an independent name of a god than as just an epithet of 'Athtar, and a

110. See the textual material in Müller (1989) 89-96, where examples of cultic hunting for Kurûm alone are also mentioned; cf. Ryckmans (1993) 373-374.
111. Cf. Müller, op. cit.
112. Dirven (1999) 282-284; pl. xi (no. 32 = PAT, 1091), in the so-called "house of the banquet", dated to AD 194.
113. See Ruppert (1993) 1226-1233.
114. CIS IV, 375, cf. Höfner (1965) 526; ead. (1970) 252-253 and 271.
115. The so-called Bulawayo stone (CIS IV, 458) is dedicated to "'Athtart and Saḥar" and with the "Totschläger-Symbol" and two heads of antilopes or oxen alludes to 'Almaqah and with the dragon's head to Saḥar, while the spearhead represents 'Athtar, see Höfner (1965), pl. I, 3 and p. 487, cf. also Höfner – Rhodokanakis (1936) 221-222.

dedicatory inscription to "'Athtar and Saḥar, the two lords of Nafqân" also speaks in favour of this[116]; perhaps the name Nafqân on the temple in Ma'rib – as proposed by M. Höfner – alludes to the appearance of the morning and evening star[117]. As an explanation of the combination 'Saḥar the point has been made that Saḥar originally belonged in the Himyaritic area, from where later, as a consequence of political changes, he came to be part of the Sabaean cult as a kind of double of 'Athtar[118]. But irrespective of whether Saḥar is to be understood as the name of the morning star alone, or that as an epithet added to 'Athtar it just emphasizes that the latter besides being the evening star also represents the morning star and dawn, Saḥar's name just confirms the previously mentioned doubleness of 'Athtar's astral character. Thus Saḥar in an inscription that also mentions 'Athtar Sharqân separately can be called *dhû kwkbn*: "the one with the star" or "the one from Kawkabân" – the latter thus a place name presumably derived from the god's name[119].

Having now drawn a picture of 'Athtar-Saḥar as in south Arabian religion he appears as the morning and evening star, heralding sunrise and sunset and characterized by dawn and sunset colours, we shall next, leaving the south Arabian area, take a look at north Syria. Here, in the far older texts from Ras Shamra-Ugarit we find the paired gods Shaḥar and Shalim whom in what follows we shall focus on in an attempt to trace the origin or background of the mythological ideas surrounding 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû in the later Syrian-Aramaic religion.

116. For the textual material see Jamme (1947) 99; Höfner (1970) 271.272; for CIS IV, 457, mentioning "the two Lords of Nafqân", see Jamme, loc cit.; id. (1962) 31.

117. Höfner (1965) 526, referring to south Semitic *nafaqa* "to cleave, divide", and *nefoq* "erscheinen", translates Nafqân by "Aufgang, besonders von Himmelskörpern gebraucht".

118. Höfner (1970) 271-272, with reference to H. von Wissmann: Zur Geschichte der Landeskunde von Alt-Südarabien.

119. See Höfner (1965) 526 on the inscription RES 4197.

3. The Semitic "Dioscuri" in North Syrian Texts, the Bible and related Literature

In the second of the excavation campaigns that were begun in 1929 in north Syrian Ras Shamra – Ugarit a clay tablet was unearthed with a text that by the editor Ch. Virolleaud was entitled "La naissance des dieux gracieux et beaux". As Virolleaud himself observes in his textual edition[120], the title actually only applies to one of the scenes of the drama: the birth of "the gracious gods", who are invoked in the first line of the text, while their begetting and birth are only described later (l. 55 sqq.), and only after the account of the conception and birth of the gods Shaḥar and Shalim. According to Virolleaud "the gracious and beautiful gods" are a group of gods, different from Shaḥar and Shalim, an interpretation endorsed by a number of subsequent textual editors. A sharp exception, however, was Th. H. Gaster, who in 1946 convincingly argued that "the gracious and beautiful gods" must be identical with Shaḥar and Shalim. A principal argument was for Gaster that the paired gods Shaḥar-Shalim in their capacity as the deities of dawn and sunset colours must be the counterparts of Azizos and Monimos in Edessa; among other things Gaster based his argument on the cult of Azizos as Phosphorus (*alias* Shaḥar) in the abovementioned Latin inscriptions from Dacia and Algeria, and on the fact that in the Ugaritic designation of "the gracious and beautiful gods": *'lm n'mm wysmm, n'm* corresponds to the name Monimos, the previously mentioned Grecized form of Semitic Mun'îm; thus, according to Gaster the two gods whose conception and birth the Ugaritic text describes must be considered to "constitute, at least in certain respects, a Canaanite counterpart of the Classical Dioscuri"[121].

Though for a number of years only endorsed by a minority of scholars, Th. H. Gaster's interpretation of Shaḥar-Shalim as being identical with "the gracious and beautiful gods" has gained

120. Virolleaud (1946) 128.
121. Gaster (1946) 69-72; the quotation: p. 70.

increased recognition since the end of the 1980s[122], and – as will probably be understood from the remarks already made – this interpretation will be adhered to in what follows. To Gaster's previous argument in favour of the identity between Shaḥar-Shalim and "the gracious and beautiful gods" D. Pardee adds a further two arguments, the most important of which is the interpretation of the characterization which the text (KTU 1.23 according to current nomenclature[123]) assigns to "the gracious gods" three times; in l. 24 and 59-61 they are given the title *'agzrym bn ym*, which Pardee – following J. Gray – translates "who delimit the day, sons of (a single) day" and sees as an indication of "the gracious gods'" function as those who delimit night from day, thus the function of the morning and evening star[124]. This characterization of "the gracious and beautiful gods" becomes even clearer if *'agzrym* is explained as an active participle in the dual, according to which the passage can be translated "the two delimiting ones, sons of (one) day"; this describes both the two gods' astral function and their equal age – the latter feature close to the idea of the Dioscuri being twin gods[125]. Besides, this characterization of "the gracious and beautiful gods" *alias* Shaḥar and Shalim as delimiting night and day is also true of Dushares-Dionysos-Orotalt-Ruḍâ in the abovementioned Nabataean inscription and of the south Arabian 'Athtar Sharqân; as mentioned, the latter title is also associated with the meaning "the east, easterly", and it is worth noting here that a fragmentary Ugaritic text (KTU 1.12, I, 7-8) presents the parallelism *km šḥr//km qdm*: "like the dawn (or Shaḥar)... like the East"[126]. But before a more detailed analysis is given of what the text KTU 1.23 can contribute towards the understanding of 'Arṣû

122. See the survey in Dijkstra (1998) 271, note 37, who himself endorses this view.
123. KTU = The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other Places 1995.
124. Pardee (1997) 279, n. 35 and 282, n. 59, referring to J. Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (2nd ed. 1965), p. 98; the word *gzr*: "to cleave, divide (into two)", cf. Hebrew; see also Bordreuil-Pardee (2004) II, 35, notes on l. 23-27 and l. 49-61.
125. For twin gods and the combination of gods of equal age having an astral character the reader is generally referred to Kuntzmann (1983), especially pp. 72-76; 137-154.
126. See p. 41 and note 94, and p. 43 and note 100 *supra*; for KTU 1.12, I, 7-8, cf. TO I, 334 and Dijkstra (1998) 279, n. 62.

and 'Azîzû, here is a brief presentation of the content and genre of the text.

After the introductory section with an invocation of "the gracious and beautiful gods", an invitation to consume bread and wine; a salutation of king, queen and temple staff (l. 1-7) there follow ritual acts against childlessness (l. 8-11), liturgical acts, a presentation of the goddesses Athirat and Raḥmay, the placing of seats for the gods and an account of the temple staff (l. 12-22). Then there follow a repeated invocation of "the gracious and beautiful gods", a mention of the sun goddess who ripens wine and grapes, concluding with a salutation of the temple staff and a repeated presentation of the two goddesses (l. 23-29). After this there follows in l. 30-66a the main theme of the text: the prelude to the sacred marriage between the god El and two unnamed women – probably the two previously mentioned goddesses Athirat and Raḥmay (the latter presumably the goddess 'Anat) – and the description of El's intercourse with the women, who conceive and give birth to Shaḥar and Shalim. After an invitation to bring the sun goddess an offering there follows another account of the sexual act and a repetition of the birth of the two gods, now under the name "the gracious and the beautiful ones". A description of the voracious appetites of the newborn babies and an appeal to offer a sacrifice "on the sacred steppe" conclude the entire section. – By way of conclusion the text describes (l. 66b-76) how after seven or eight years "the gracious and beautiful gods" roam the steppe and come across "a guardian of the sown land", from whom they demand food and wine.

The genre of the text – as is often the case with the mythological texts from Ugarit – is debatable. Since it contains both mythological and ritual elements, it is natural to define it as "an incantation within a larger framework of a cultic occasion, perhaps the preparation for the autumnal festival", in which the king and queen of the town may have played a prominent role together with the temple staff[127]. As for the mythological contents of the text: the conception and the birth of the astral gods Shaḥar and Shalim, it must be imagined that the audience wanted to recall and – in the cultic celebration of the wine harvest in the autumnal

127. Surveys of interpretations of the textual genre: TO I, 360-365; Xella (1973) 15-24. The quotation comes from Dijkstra (1998) 269.

festival (presumably in the month that in two other Ugaritic texts is called *riš yn*: "the beginning of the wine") – to retain the continued activity of the two gods in their capacity as companions of the sun god with its ripening power for the wine and the other autumnal crops[128].

Over and beyond the meaning of their names, in the text KTU 1.23 it is the relationship between the sun goddess Shapshu and Shaḥar-Shalim that emphasizes their character of being Gods of Light.. Thus it is said at l. 25-26 that "Shapshu colours their vine leaves golden, and their grapes" – a feature that we shall return to; and immediately after the first account of the birth of the two gods the appeal sounds at l. 54: "raise a sacrifice to Shapshu, the great Lady, and to the stars"; the latter, in well-known Semitic fashion, have been perceived as gods as in KTU 1.10, I, 3-4, where "sons of god" stands in parallel with "the assembly of stars". That Shaḥar and Shalim with their function as forerunners of sunrise and sunset have their attention directed towards the sky is also suggested by a passage in the text, KTU 1.100, 52: *šḥr w šlm šmmh*: "Shaḥar and Shalim turned towards the sky", and – more generally – their astral character is confirmed by a text in which they are enumerated in a group of astral deities or gods of light in an invocation of a number of Ugaritic deities[129].

Before the appearance in KTU 1.23 of the paired gods Shaḥar and Shalim is examined in detail in relation to 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû and other corresponding deities, the meaning of their names and function will be briefly clarified:

From the use of the word in Classical Hebrew it appears that Shaḥar denotes the early dawning morning light with the reddish hue with which the rising sun colours the sky just before and during sunrise: "Morgendämmerung, Morgenröte"; from the basic meaning of common Semitic *šlm*: "to be whole, complete, finished" Shalim denotes the close of the day, which of course presents the same phenomenon of light as the beginning of the day:

128. See Dijkstra (1998) 279-283 and Pardee (1997) 275 on KTU 1.41, 1 and l. 87, 1.

129. Cf. Dijkstra (1998) 277-278 on KTU 1.100, 52; at KTU 1.123, 10-12 they are mentioned together with, among others, *Ngh*, which presumably means "lustre", cf. Hebrew *nôgâh*, see Dijkstra, l. c., note 54; Pardee (2001) I, 701, note 57.

"Abenddämmerung, Abendröte"[130]. On the assumption that the morning and evening star in the Ugaritic pantheon is represented by 'Athtar and 'Athtarte, it is the view of some scholars that Shaḥar and Shalim only denote the reddish morning and evening colours during sunrise and sunset[131]. But in Ugarit 'Athtar's and 'Athtarte's astral function seems to have been very unobtrusive, and it is not explicitly documented in the textual material; and to this it may be added that the morning and evening star (the Venus star) – as appearing most clearly during sunrise and sunset, and bearing in mind the general view in the ancient Orient of the astral powers as being active deities – must unavoidably to the viewer become fused with the sunrise and sunset colours[132]. On the other hand there is agreement that the general view in the Semitic religions of the Venus star as being two deities – occasionally seen as masculine in its capacity as morning star and feminine in its capacity as evening star (cf. pp. 36-37 and 41-42 *supra*) – harks back to a time when the Venus star was assumed to be two different stars[133].

* * *

On the basis of the interpretation of the text KTU 1.23 given above it can immediately be established as the first point that in the description of "the gracious and beautiful gods" Shaḥar's and

130. Ruppert (1993) 1226-1232 on Shaḥar in Classical Hebrew; on Shalim cf. Aistleitner (1953) 305-309, who besides the Hebrew also treats of especially the Akkadian material.
131. Thus Pardee (1997) 281-282, notes 58-59, and Gulde (1998) 320, while Gese (1970) 80-81; 168-169 vacillates between "Morgen- und Abendröte" and "Morgen- und Abendstern".
132. The textual material in Ugarit reports nothing on 'Athtar as an astral or heavenly god, but as such he was undoubtedly worshipped in an earlier period prior to the date of the texts now known; it may further be assumed that 'Athtar as an original astral god (Venus) so to speak has "eliminated" the functions of "morning and evening star", cf. Caquot (1958) 49-52; Henninger (1976) 139-143, and the very distinct formulations in Kuntzmann (1983) 139; 142, for instance: "Shaḥar et Shalim constituent les phases les plus marquantes de 'Aṯtar, comme étoile du soir et étoile du matin" (p. 142); Wyatt (1987) 382; id. (1998) 332, note 47 views Shaḥar and Shalim as hypostases of Venus = 'Athtar, cf. also the discussion of this in Gulde (1998) 320-321.
133. Cf. for instance Rendel Harris (1913) 260-261; Henninger (1976) 150-151 and note 86 with further references; Pardee (2000) I, 276-277, note 48 and in great detail: Dijkstra (1998) 275-277.

Shalim's birth we find again several of the elements that in the cult of Dionysos *alias* Dushares-Orotalt/Ruḍâ we have seen to form part of the mythology of the Oriental gods of light: thus one of the two goddesses in labour, Rahmay *alias* "the Virgin 'Anat"[134], appears as the older west Semitic version of the myth of the child of god being borne by a *young* woman, called "virgin" (*b'lt*) and by nature a heavenly goddess – the latter point especially characteristic of 'Anat, who among the Ugaritic goddesses is the only one to have the title "the Goddess of the lofty Heavens" (*b'lt šmm rmm)*" (135). The other goddess in labour, Athirat, who in the Ugaritic text material appears as the wife of the god El and with him makes up the supreme, creative pair of gods (entitled "the Creator of the creatures" and "Progenitress of the Gods" respectively)[136], is moreover described in the text as the one who nurses the two newborn gods of light – in the actual words of the text:"who suck the nipples of the breasts of Athirat" (KTU l. 23, 24), while l. 59 and 61: "who suck the nipples of the breasts of the Lady" very probably refers to 'Anat; Athirat performs the same function (and presumably also here together with 'Anat) for the king's son Yaṣṣib in the Ugaritic legend describing the childless King Keret[137].

When the text KTU 1.23 has the two astral gods of light be conceived and born twice – a feature that is not known from the far younger Oriental mythological material in Hellenistic times, the double sequence of events appearing in the Ugaritic text can be explained in M. Dijkstra's excellent formulation: "the "double" birth of the two gods is easy to construe as a magic-stylistic device of incantation. In a pre-logical frame of mind, the birth of two

134. Raḥmay (*rḥmy*) is most probably to be taken as an epithet referring to 'Anat, though the name could here also be applied to Athirat, cf. Gibson (1977) 123, note 10; Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 99; II 136; Pardee (1997) 278, note 22; Wyatt (1998) 327, note 16, identifies her with the sun goddess Shapshu.

135. 'Anat as a celestial goddess, cf. Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 94-96; on the Ugaritic passage quoted see KTU 1.108, 6-7 = RS.24.252, 6-7.

136. El and Athirat as the supreme and creative pair of gods, entitled "the Creator of the creatures" (*bny bnwt*) and "Progenitress of the Gods" (*qnyt 'ilm*), cf. references in Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 71; II, 70, notes 4-5.

137. KTU 1.15, II. 25-28; the text can with great probability be restored to the effect that 'Anat is nursing here together with Athirat. It may also be 'Anat who is referred to as nursing in KTU 1.23, 59 and 1.61 under the title "the Mistress" (*št*), a title that she is also given in other Ugaritic texts, see Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) II, 72, note 2, and Gibson (1977) 112 on KTU 1.18, IV, 27 (note 10).

gods by two wives of El apparently implies a "second" birth from the same women. Such a repeated birth is, of course, illogical, but the birth of the same pair of twins from two separate women would be illogical too. The heavenly twins are regularly born again to serve their destiny in Heaven and on Earth… – What this myth wanted to express is the double, contrastive nature of the heavenly twins"[138].

The prelude to the central theme in KTU 1.23: the sacred wedding or *hieros gamos* between El and the two women whose names are not mentioned here but who are here presupposed to be the goddesses Athirat and Raḥmay ('Anat)[139] begins with a scene (l. 30-31, repeated l. 35-36) that takes place "at the seashore, along the ocean"; here is El, who "seizes hold of the two women drawing water, who draw water up to the rim of the large vessel". The interpretation of the text is rendered difficult by the presence of the word *mšt'ltm*, the translation of which: "drawing water (from a well or a spring)" appears the most probable one considering the indication of locality: "at the seashore, along the ocean"[140].

Now it is a well-known phenomenon in the Semitic Orient that the drawing and fetching of water is part of the women's work – classical examples are presented by Genesis 24, 10 sqq. or the Gospel according to St. John 4, 5 sqq. – but to this may be added the equally well-known ritual use of the fertility-giving sacred power of water during the annual festivals in the temples, with Lucian's description in *Dea syria* chs. 13 and 48 of the rites connected with the drawing of water in the temple in Syrian Hierapolis-Membidj as the classical example. In the Ugaritic text the two women's drawing of water must indeed be seen in connection with the acts that the text goes on to describe immediately afterwards and which are unambiguously intended to strengthen and display El's sexual prowess in anticipation of the imminent beget-

138. Dijkstra (1998) 273-274.

139. Thus in Gaster (1946) 53, but more vaguely TO I 374 "déesses selon toute vraisemblance", cf. besides Pardee (1997) 278, note 22.

140. For diverging explanations of *mšt'ltm*, here taken as a feminine participle in the dual, 'ishtaf'al (i. e. corresponding to the Arabic Xth declension with causative-reflexive import), from the root *'ly*, literally: "the (women) drawing water for themselves", see Pardee (1997) 280, note 44, and del Olmo Lete (1983) 111-113.

ting of the two astral gods of light[141]. But to this should be added as the most central point the circumstance that according to ancient Semitic belief the stars were rain-givers: this appears both from Arabian sources describing the pre-Islamic age, and from the Ugaritic text KTU 1.3, II, 38-41, describing the goddess ‘Anat’s water libations with “rain (that) the stars pour down”[142]. On this background it is interesting to read Epiphanius’s description (*adversus haeres*, 41, 30) of the annual winter solstice festival on January 6 in Egypt and elsewhere for the child of god – for the Christians of course the Infant Jesus, but as shown by other sources – originally for Dionysos-Osiris. In its character the festival is identical with the one mentioned above, which Epiphanius describes in his “Panarion” in honour of Dusares (Orotalt/Ruḍâ)-Dionysos in Elusa, Petra and Alexandria (p. 39-40). But as a special feature Epiphanius recounts in *adversus haeres* how water is drawn from the Nile that is then changed into wine. This water-drawing viewed in isolation might be a feature special to the Egyptian festival if Epiphanius had not at the same time expressly pointed out that the same festival and rite also took place “in Gerasa in Arabia”[143]. In Hellenistic times this locality belonged to Decapolis, an area which, as we have seen earlier, is rich in material showing a widespread cult of Azizos and the Dioscuri, the latter precisely in Dionysian guise[144].

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141. The two women’s exclamation at KTU 1.23, 31-34: “One cries out: “Father. Father,” the other cries out: “Mother, mother! May Il’s hand (i. e. the *membrum virile*) stretch out as long as the sea, (may) Il’s hand (stretch out as long) as the flowing waters…” (translation: Pardee (1997) 280, who besides (note 47) explains the exclamation “Father…Mother”, strange in this context, as expressing “the purpose of catching a male, indeed a divine one. If such be the case, the cries in l. 32-33 are adressed to their own parents as in “Daddy, mommy, what do we do now?”). van Selms (1954) 62 sees the use of “father” here “as a courtesy use of the word”.

142. See TO I 161-162, referring for pre-Islamic beliefs to Wellhausen (1897) 210-211.

143. On the sources of the solstice and epiphany festival and its pre-Christian content as it was elaborated in Egypt, southern Palestine and among the Nabataeans cf. Norden (1924) 24-40; Noiville (1928) 363-371, and Retsö (2002) 602-605; on Epiphanius: PG 40, 30.

144. On the epigraphical and iconographical material from Decapolis and Haurân see *supra*, pp. 31-33; Gerasa in Decapolis: cf. Weber (2002) 5-6 (map p. 5).

The relationship between water and wine, in Epiphanius of course associated with the evangelical account of the marriage in Cana, may now perhaps be considered to be a far older element, on the background of the passage in the Ugaritic text where wine-growing, wine-drinking and the ripening of the grapes are a common theme in the sequence of events which – after the introductory drawing of water – describes the conception and birth of the two Ugaritic Dioscuri and their subsequent insisting on being treated to bread and wine[145].

In this connection it is also noteworthy that wine-drinking was a marked feature of the cult of the Palmyrene 'Arṣû. Among the deities whose names are indicated on the numerous tesserae, which gave admittance to the cultic gatherings, in Palmyra, Ugarit and the rest of the Semitic world called *mrzḥ* (corresponding to Greek *thiasoi*), where especially wine-drinking was a prominent element, 'Arṣû distinguishes himself by being one of those whose name is found on the greatest number of tesserae, only surpassed by the triad of gods Bel, ʿAglibôl and Yarḥibôl. And it was exactly in 'Arṣû's own temple that the 1980s witnessed the finding of a great number of tesserae of the type RTP, 174, showing 'Arṣû as a warrior with a camel; and parts of the foundation of the temple suggest that the temple area *may* have been used for *mrzḥ* banquets. And considering the previously mentioned relationship: 'Arṣû-Dushares-Dionysos it is very significant that *mrzḥ* banquets were also held for Dushares[146].

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145. See the passages KTU l.23, 6-11; 25-26 and l. 70-76, and translation and commentary in Pardee (1997) 276 sqq. – It is doubtful, however whether *mt w šr*, whose "staff of bereavement and staff of widowhood is pruned by the pruners and binders of wine" refers to El or to the god Baʿal's antagonist Môt; but an interim interpretation is provided by Pardee (1997) 277, note 13, who "in this deity will see a new figure who attends the feast and plays his role, perhaps depicting agricultural fertility through viticultural imagery".

146. On *mrzḥ* generally and particularly in Ugarit cf. Eissfeldt (1969) 187-195; besides, in Ugarit McLaughlin (1991) 265-281; in Palmyra: Février (1931) 201-208. In the Baʿalshamin temple an inscription indicates that there was a banquet hall used for *mrzḥ* gatherings, see Dunant (1971) no. 21 = PAT 0177, see also Pardee (1988) 58-59 on the Ugaritic KTU l.114 (El's *mrzḥ* feast, cf. *infra*, p. 57). – A survey of the number of tesserae with the names of gods in RTP 191-196. The number of tesserae showing 'Arṣû with a standing camel (of the type RTP 174) has since RTP (1955) been increased by a total of 120 examples, found locally where his temple is situated, cf. Ruprechtsberger

A further emphasis of the fact that the two conceiving and parturient goddesses and their children in the Ugaritic text are in a certain relationship with the wine is the circumstance that one of the Ugaritic texts dealing with *mrzḥ* appears to relate this phenomenon directly to the goddess 'Anat (*alias* Raḥmay in KTU 1.23)[147]. As already mentioned in the introductory comments on KTU 1.23 concerning the relation: the sun goddess Shapshu-Shaḥar and Shalim (p. 50 *supra*), the birth of "the gracious gods" is directly connected with the ripening of the wine leaves and grapes (KTU 1.23, 23-26). It is now interesting that it can be demonstrated concerning the sun deity, too – as seems to be the case with 'Anat in Ugarit – that the cult of the former included *mrzḥ* banquets. Thus a Phoenician inscription from the fourth century BC on a bronze drinking bowl (*phialè*) states that "two cups we offer to the *mrzḥ* of Shamash". The editors of the inscription, N. Avigad and J. C. Greenfield, at the same time call attention to the fact that Shamash, who unlike Shapash in Ugarit is a male deity[148], was the object of the cult in Palmyra, too, when the *mrzḥ* banquets were held. As appears from the relevant tesserae, the banquets involving Shamash were partly banquets for both Bel and Shamash, partly banquets for Shamash alone[149]. Viewed in the light of the acting deities in KTU 1.23, this fact does not become less interesting owing to the circumstance that the place of worship of Shamash seems to have been situated either in or quite near the temple of the goddess Allat, whose presumed identity with the goddess Athirat we shall at once proceed to discuss in detail[150].

(1987) 337; As'ad-Briquel-Chatonnet-Yon (2005) 1-10 with figs. 1-4; on the possible use of the temple for banquets cf. *idem*, pp. 3-6. – That wine and the possession of vineyards were an essential element surrounding the *mrzḥ* guilds appears clearly from several Ugaritic texts, cf. McLaughlin, pp.267-269, for Palmyra from the title of the leader of the individual *mrzḥ*, in Greek: *symposiarchos*, which renders Aramaic *rb mrzḥ'*, cf. the comment on CIS II, 3919. – *mrzḥ* banquets for Dushares in Gaia and in Petra: Healey (2001) 90; 165-169.

147. Cf. Eissfeldt (1969) 192; McLaughlin (1991) on KTU 4.642 = RS 19.1003.

148. On the sun deity and its varying gender in West Semitic religion cf. Lipinski (1991) 57-72.

149. Avigad- Greenfield (1982) 118-128, especially p. 128 with references.

150. Inscriptions from the area surrounding the Allat temple besides referring to the goddess also mention "gods who live near her" and explicitly mention Shamash and Raḥim, see Milik (1972) 115-116; Gawlikowski (1973) 101-103, and Teixidor (1979) 53-54; 62-64.

The "Dionysian" character of the text KTU 1.23, whose sequence of events is undeniably directed by the god El, is accentuated by the equally dominant role that he plays in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.114, which is introduced by the words: "El slaughters game in his house // prey within his palace // (and) invites the gods to partake...". The nature of this feast is specified in l. 14-15 of the text: "El calls together his drinking (group), // takes his seat in his drinking club", where the last word very suggestively renders Ugaritic *mrzḥ*[151]. The action describes a gorgeous drinking bout with lots of meat and especially wine, and the culmination of the action must be said to be the scene in which El is carried home. Among the gods participating one notes in this text – as in KTU 1.23 – the goddess 'Anat, but now in company with the goddess 'Athtarte. – Besides, the text concludes with remedies for a hangover!

The abovementioned considerations that conclude the comments on the "Dionysian" character of the text KTU 1.23 must be said further to corroborate that its "Sitz im Leben" was a temple feast which as mentioned was celebrated in the month of "the Beginning of Wine"[152].

If next we turn to what KTU 1.23 states in the main section l. 30-66a about the two conceiving and parturient goddesses and their relationship with the god El, it leaps to the eye that sometimes they are referred to as "El's women" (l. 39; 42; 48-49; 51-52, and 60), sometimes as "El's daughters" (l. 45-46), and at last El proclaims: "O, women (whom) I have wedded, o, sons, (whom) I have begot" (l. 64b-65a). On the face of it, it seems odd that they should be called "El's daughters" at all; this is true not least of Athirat considering the fact that it is well known and beyond any doubt that in the Ugaritic texts she appears as El's wife. It was mentioned above that the goddesses' invocation of El as "father" can according to A. van Selms be viewed as a courtesy gesture, but – as van Selms goes on to state in relation to this text: "As El is the father of the gods, and as a god marries divine beings, his wives can be described as his daughters"[153]. But the designation of 'Anat

151. The translation in Pardee (1997) 303-304, cf. also detailed comment: Pardee (1988) 13-74, especially p. 18 on the somewhat doubtful text itself.

152. Cf. *supra*, p. 50.

153. Cf. note 141 *supra*, and van Selms (1954) 49. For El as the creator cf. note 136 *supra*; as the father or originator of the gods: Gese (1970) 97; 100-101.

– Raḥmay as "El's daughter" is also surprising in view of the fact that in the Ba'al texts this goddess appears as Ba'al's sexual partner. But on this point it must be observed – again with van Selms – that polygamy was not reserved for human beings – as shown by the text KTU 1.23 itself – and further that the two "divine lovers", Ba'al and 'Anat, in their "roles as lovers" can address each other as "brother" and "sister" respectively[154]. – And there can be no doubt about Athirat's and 'Anat-Raḥmay's role as mothers and nursing goddesses as described in the rest of the Ugaritic text material, though this function is less prominent in the latter than in the former[155].

In the Ugaritic Ba'al texts El's wife Athirat in her capacity as mother goddess is sometimes described like this: "the goddess and the host of her kin" (*'ilt wṣbrt aryh*)[156]. But over and above this, the common Semitic word for "goddess", *'ilt* (Ilat) refers to El's wife and that so frequently that it comes close to being a proper name[157]. By way of conclusion it can be established concerning the two goddesses who in KTU 1.23 conceive and give birth to the two Ugaritic Dioscuri Shaḥar and Shalim that they are referred to both as El's wives ("women") and as his "daughters" – the latter title irrespective of the fact that one of them, Athirat, appears as "Progenitress of the Gods" in the rest of the Ugaritic material, and together with El, "the Creator of the creatures", makes up the supreme pair of gods, termed *'il* ("the god", El) and *'ilt* ("the goddess", Ilat).

Next it will be relevant to compare the statements in l. 30-66a just adduced with an important Palmyrene inscription dedicated to, among others, the god 'Arṣû. What is involved is a Palmyrene altar inscription briefly mentioned in the introduction, the

154. van Selms (1954) 18-19; 70-71. – Pardee's surprise (Pardee (1997) 278, note 21) that the two goddesses are called "women" is on the other hand quite unfounded, since Ugaritic *aṯm* is an ordinary term for "wife", cf. for instance KTU 14 I, 12 sqq. of King Keret's wives.

155. The two goddesses' character of nursing mother goddesses (*nutrix*) was touched on p. 52 in notes 136-137 *supra*; on 'Anat in the Ugaritic texts see also Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 98-100; on Athirat, *ibid.* p. 71-74.

156. Cf. KTU 1.3, V, 36-37; 1.4, I, 6-8; II, 24-26 and IV, 49-60; Pardee (1977) 255-259 and Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) II, 70, note 6.

157. Cf. Pope-Röllig (Haussig) (1965) 247 and Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) II, 69, note 2.

finding place of which west of the neighbouring agora now documents where 'Arṣû's temple was situated[158]. The translation of the eight lines of the inscription (PAT 0992) is as follows:

"In the month of Elûl, year 375, (AD September 63), Bar'a, son of Moqîmû, son of Tûrî , from the tribe of Mattabôl, offered these altars to 'Arṣû and to *Qsmy* (Qismayâ) and to the daughters of El, the good gods, for the life of Moqîmû, his father and for his own life, and for the life of his son, (and for the life of) his brothers"[159].

Besides being the inscription that has assured us of the location of 'Arṣû's temple, it is quite interesting viewed on the background of the Ugaritic KTU 1.23 text. As will be seen from the names of the deities to whom this altar is dedicated, there is a remarkable correspondence with the major male and female agents in the Ugaritic text: the clearest point is the mention of the god El and next, though without specification, of El's daughters[160], and finally of 'Arṣû, whom we can put on the same footing as the Ugaritic Shalim, as has been repeatedly emphasized above.

At the first blush it might seem daring to wish to find again the agent deities from the Ugaritic text in a Palmyrene inscription which is about 1400 years younger. But concerning this objection it may first be observed as a general point that the religious phenomena of a given culture will always show a great degree of conservatism. Or as formulated by M. Liverani in relation to some mythological texts from Ugarit: "Elementi presenti in questi testi del XIII secolo si ritrovano infatti nella religione fenicio-punico in età tarda, e dal confronto emergono interessanti chiaramenti." And in the second place it is a concrete fact that El is well documented in Palmyra precisely in his capacity as a creative god.

158. Cf. p. 5 and note 3 *supra*.

159. Cf. al-As'ad-Gawlikowski (1997) 75-76 (no. 118), and Kaizer (2002) 117-118.

160. The relevant passage in PAT 0992: *l'rṣw wlqsmy' (w)lbnt 'l 'lhy' ṭby'* could also be translated: "for 'Arṣû and for Qismaya and for Banita, for good gods…" (thus As'ad-Gawlikowski (1997) 75, who also adduces the previously quoted translation, which must be preferred for syntactical reasons and which has gained general acceptance, cf. also besides the works mentioned in notes 3 and 159 (Kaizer), Dirven (1999) 89-90. – A name of a goddess, Banîta, is known in the fifth century BC from Aramaic papyri from Hermopolis in Egypt and can presumably, on the basis of the meaning "Female Creator", be identified with Athirat (Ashera), see Milik (1967) 558-563, and du Mesnil du Buisson (1970) 121.

Thus, in a Greco-Palmyrene altar inscription from AD 39 the altar in the Palmyrene part is dedicated to "El, the Creator of the Earth", who in the Greek part is called Poseidon (PAT, 2778), and the same Aramaic name of a god is found on four tesserae (RTP, 220-223)[161]. Palmyrene *'lqwnr'* or *'lqnr'* has been well known in Semitic and Hittite texts since the second millennium BC under varying forms like for instance *'el qônê shamayim wâ-âræṣ* (Genesis 14, 19) and Elkurnisha (in Hittite texts, and incidentally together with Athirat, there termed Ashertu)[162].

The question about which goddesses hide concretely behind "El's daughters" in the Palmyrene inscription from AD 63 has been answered in several of the works listed that have dealt with it by a reference to the fact that "El's daughters *alias* Allah's daughters" are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'ân, sura 53, 19 as being al-Lât, al-'Uzzâ and Manât[163].

Here, where we are concerned with the relationship between the inscription and KTU 1.23, the most important one among these three is the goddess al-Lât, whom we know both as Allat from Palmyra and from the previously mentioned Herodotus quotation as Alilat, she and Dionysos-Orotalt being supposed to be the only deities among the Arabs[164]. The ancient Arabian Allat had north Arabia as her main area, but we find her besides in Nabataean Haurân, thus in a Nabataean inscription from Salkhad (east of Bostra), where she is mentioned on an altar dedicated to: "Allat, the mother of the gods, belonging to our Lord Rab'el"[165]. If it could be documented with certainty that Rab'el ("El (is) great") is the name of a god, this presentation of Allat could equally well have been applied to the Ugaritic pair of gods Athirat-El; but in

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161. Liverani (1969) 339. – For El and Poseidon in Palmyra cf. Teixidor (1979) 25-27 and Gawlikowski (1990) 2647. The identification with Poseidon can be explained from the Ugaritic El's position as the god of freshwater and salt water, cf. Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 74-75 with note 51 (vol. II, 79).

162. Cf. Gese (1970) 113-115, on the Semitic and Hittite material.

163. Thus al-As'ad-Teixidor (1985) 286-293; Dirven (1999) 89-90 and Kaizer (2002) 117.

164. Cf. pp. 5 and 36; 38 *supra*.

165. Allat as a north Arabian goddess, but known in the outermost parts of the Nabataeans' country: Krone (1992) 88-124; 131-145; Healey (2001) 108-114; for "Allat, the mother of the gods", CIS II, 185, see Sourdel (1952) 73-74; Krone (1992) 341, who remarks, however, that doubt has been shed on the reading.

this connection it is important that Allat's function as a mother goddess and fertility goddess is well documented in other respects[166]. Therefore the view ventilated by J. F. Healey and J. Retsö is probably justified when it is stated that Alilat (Allat) , in Herodotus associated with Dionysos-Orotalt (= Ruḍâ-'Arṣû) *alias* Dushares, is the mother of Dushares-Dionysos[167]; this is the more probable since Allat-Alilat – as emphasized by S. Krone among others – especially in her capacity as mother goddess is quite close to Ugaritic Athirat, to which must be added their common name: Ilat-Allat[168]. – On the basis of the interpretation of "El's daughters" in the Palmyrene altar inscription as referring among others to Allat we can thus establish that 'Arṣû here appears in close contact with two of the three protagonists in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.23.

Of the two other goddesses that the Qur'ân refers to as Allah's daughters we can of course, in relation to the "El's daughters" of the altar inscription, disregard al-'Uzzâ, whom we have earlier described as being the feminine, north Arabian counterpart of the Aramaic masculine 'Azîzû – Azizos[169]. On the other hand the third goddess, Manât, is well known in Palmyra, where under the name Manawat she seems to be associated with Bel Ḥammôn in her capacity as the latter's companion. As the name conveys, Manawat is the goddess who decides the destiny of human beings, and together with Bel Ḥammôn she is besides in Palmyra the protector (*gd*) of the Benê Agrûd tribe[170].

If – as a probable hypothesis – one wants to find Manawat, the goddess of destiny, included among "El's daughters" in the dedi-

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166. Allat as a mother goddess generally, possibly influenced by the Atargatis/Aphrodite cult: Drijvers (1978) 331-351; Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) II, 83; 131; Krone (1992) 339-342; see further p. 68-69 *infra*.
167. Healey (2001) 105; Retsö (2003) 603-604.
168. Krone (1992) 119-124, see also the comments in Teixidor (1979) 75-76. For the name Alilat transmitted by Herodotus and the older Arabic forms of the name *lt, 'lt, hn- 'lt* cf. Krone (1992) 43-63; a critical evaluation of these problems is provided by J. Hämeen-Anttila and R. Rollinger (2001) 86-91, but they desist from giving any explanation of the appearance of this form of the name in Herodotus.
169. Cf. p. 16 and note 50 *supra*.
170. Cf. Gawlikowski (1973) 24; 65; 83-86; Kaizer (1997-98) 54-56; id. (2002) 108-116.

cation formula of the altar inscription, this rules out the deity whom the dedication calls *Qsmy* (by the editors vocalized as Qismayâ) being identical with Manawat, though one of the senses that have been proposed to account for this unique name: "celui en charge du destin" or "Celui du sort" would be a strong argument in favour of such an identification. This explanation is based on the meaning of the Arabic root *qsm*, whose basic meaning is "to distribute, separate" (in single parts, pieces or portions), thus *qisma*: "portion", hence further: "destiny, lot"[171].

But if the identification of Qismayâ with Manawat is thus improbable, we find in Palmyra an alternative identification, namely the goddess Nemesis, who appears by name in a Palmyrene relief, side by side – *mirabile dictu* – with the goddess Allat[172]. Nemesis is, however, also referred to in the previously mentioned relief from Wadi Arafa together with a number of other Palmyrene deities, among them 'Arṣû and 'Ashtarte[173], and her possible appearance in the dedication formula of the 'Arṣû altar must thus be said to be without importance in an evaluation of the deities mentioned here in relation to the Ugaritic text KTU 1.23. However, as an alternative explanation of the name Qismayâ A. Caquot has proposed Aramaic *qṣm* in the sense of "divination", which implies that Qismayâ becomes the name of an oracle-giving deity, though he is most inclined to accept the Arabic sense of *qsm*[174]. But considering the fact that the dedication of the inscription opens with 'Arṣû, it may not be without interest to follow up the sense ventilated by Caquot. For if we turn to Classical Syriac, where the corresponding idiom is written *qṣm* (with an emphatic *ṣ*), we here note the senses "to use divination" and "divination, sorcery", and among the numerous, varying examples showing the use of the word we find – with a quotation from a Syriac-Arabic

171. Thus al-As'ad-Gawlikowski (1985) 286-289, and Gawlikowski (1990) 2623. If *qsmy'* is explained as being a goddess, the ending –*y* 'must be explained as the Arabic feminine ending –*ay* (which does not otherwise occur in Palmyrene) with the added status emphaticus ending 'Alef; if –*ay* is the well-known common Semitic nisbe ending, the name in the feminine should be Qismyatâ, cf. Cantineau (1935) 114.

172. Briquel-Chatonnet (1990) 183-187 = PAT 2825.

173. Cf. p. 10 and note 24 *supra*.

174. Caquot in: As'ad-Gawlikowski (1985) 292; cf. Hoftijzer-Jongeling (1995) II, 1098.

lexicographical source – the sense "to decide, invoke, *make decisions by means of the stars*", the latter also to be found in Bar Bahlûl's *Lexicon syriacum* (AD 963)[175]. Even though the astral sense in the Syriac material only occurs to a limited extent, one may hypothetically ventilate an interpretation of the name Qismayâ as denoting a male deity of an astral character, among whose functions are advising and giving answers when human beings approach the astral powers. A god having this character or function might well be one of the two Dioscuri, *in hoc casu* the morning star 'Azîzû, who is then invoked here just after his evening counterpart 'Arṣû[176]. The Arabic sense of the root *qsm*: "to separate" might lead to the same identification, with reference to the previously mentioned Nabataean epitaph where Dushares (*alias* Orotalt-Ruḍâ) is called "the one who separates night from day", and to the interpretation of *shrq*, also quoted, in the Arabian 'Athtar's epithet Sharqan: "to cleave, divide" – in both cases with reference to the function assigned to the morning and evening star: that of separating night from day[177].

After we have now concluded the assessment of the statements in the main section of the entire Ugaritic text (KTU 1.23, 30-66a) concerning the two gods of light and their mothers in relation to the deities in the Palmyrene altar inscription, among them 'Arṣû, an attempt will next be made to assess the last section of the text, l. 66b-76.

After El's exclamation, l. 64b-65a: "O, women (whom) I have wedded, o, sons (whom) I have begot", the transition to the scene of the events in this section is provided by the words in l. 65b-66a: "take up and prepare (offerings) in the midst of the holy steppe, there they run to and fro to stones and to stocks"[178]. The new section then continues with the time indication, l. 66b-67a: "for seven full years, eight cycles of time", which can syntactically be connected either with the preceding sentence or with what follows,

175. Payne-Smith (1901-29) II, 3704-05; *qeṣam:* (Arabic) *ya'zimu, yunadjdjimu.* Bar Bahlûl (1971) II, 1827: *qeṣma:* (Arabic) *tukahhinu. tunadjdjimu.*

176. Understood as the name of a god, the form *qsmy* ' is more naturally to be explained as a nisbe form in the masculine status emphaticus, cf. note 171.

177. Cf. p. 41 and note 94, and p. 43 and note 100 *supra.*

178. Cf. the translation in Driver (1956) 124, who, however, connects this sentence with the indication of time in l. 66b sq.

where the text has (l. 67b-68a): "the gracious gods are wandering on the field, they scoured (or: hunted on) the fringes of the steppe". While there is hardly any cause for dwelling at length on the seven or eight years of the time indication, which is a well-known standard formulation in the Ugaritic texts that just denotes a certain longish period[179], there is all the more reason for commenting in detail on the indication of locality, which in l. 65 and l. 68 is called "the holy steppe" (*mdbr qdš*) and "the fringes of the steppe" (or "the region of the steppe" (*pat mdbr*[180]).

The meanings of Semitic *mdbr* are particularly well known from the Old Testament, where the word first and foremost denotes "agriculturally unexploited areas, mainly in the foothills of southern Palestine, which serve as the grazing land par excellence for the flocks, and the cattle of the semisedentary and sedentary agriculturist population" and also "the designation of the outskirts of a permanent settlement", but is further "employed to denote the true desert, the arid zones beyond the borders of the cultivated land and drift"[181]. Besides, *mdbr* as such a desert area is the place where dangerous, hostile and weird animals live and where nocturnal demons and – with a designation from Arabian popular belief – djinn play their tricks[182]. Thus an Ugaritic text gives an example of the dangers lying in wait there also for the gods, namely KTU 1.12, I, 34 sqq., where "Ba'al goes out and hunts, he wanders on the fringes of the steppe, and lo, he will reach the Eaters and he will reach the Tearers..."[183]. The steppe (*mdbr*) is thus also the right place to which, according to the Old Testament (Leviticus 16, 10), the scapegoat should be sent on the Day of Atonement, loaded with the sins of the people (on this topic see later). But according to the Old Testament the steppe is also the place where people – at least for a time – can take refuge and survive: cases in point are a Hagar and an Ishmael, a David

179. Cf. TO I 348, note p, on KTU 1.12, 44-45, and de Moor (1987) 127, note 65.

180. As remarked by Haldar(1950) 36, note 6, Hebrew *pe'â*, corresponding to Ugaritic *pat*, can mean "direction, region".

181. Cf. Talmon (1966) 40-41; *id.*, ThWAT, s.v. *Mdbr*, 660 sqq.

182. Talmon (1966) 42-44; correspondingly in ancient Arabian popular belief (djinn), cf. Wellhausen (1897) 149-151.

183. Cf. the translation in Løkkegaard (1955) 11; here, too (with a phonetic variant) the steppe is called *pat mlbr*, cf. note 180. On the mythological relations between this text and KTU 1.23 see Schloen (1993) 209-220.

and a prophet like Elijah[184]. Thus, with P. Xella, the steppe or desert may be characterized as "in un certo senso l'"altro mondo", l'antitesi netta del proprio ambiente di vita, di lavoro"[185], which is emphasized by the circumstance that *mdbr* and the cognate *dbr* in both Ugarit and the Old Testament can denote the netherworld; or to quote Dijkstra: "*mdbr* is an appropriate mythical term to denote metaphorically one of the fringes between the inhabited land and the Netherworld"[186]. In Babylonian-Assyrian texts the concepts *edin* and *ṣêru* – corresponding to *mdbr* – have the same meaning, here in both a positive and a negative function in relation to gods as well as to human beings[187]. This semantic doubleness is a natural explanation of the fact that the sacrifices after the birth of the two "gracious and beautiful" gods of light are brought into"the midst of the *holy* steppe" (*tk mdbr qdš*, l. 65) – an indication of locality which – despite the fact that Psalm 29, 8-9 in the Old Testament describes how "Yahweh shaketh the steppe # the steppe of Qadesh" – should hardly be understood as a concrete geographical locality, but rather as an indication that the sacrifices in question should be offered up in an area outside the so to speak "normal" or "profane" world; thus the abovementioned Akkadian concepts *ṣêru* and *edin* are occasionally referred to as being of "divine character"[188]. And when the text goes on to give an account of how the two recently begotten and hungry gods of light are now seeking to satisfy their voracious appetites, described in l. 61b-64: "(One) lip to the earth, (another) lip to the heavens, into their mouths enter the birds of the heavens and the fish in the sea...they put (food) into their mouths from the right and the

184. Genesis 16, 6 sqq. and 21, 14 sqq.; 2 Samuel 15, 23 sqq. and 1 Kings 19, 3 sqq.

185. Xella (1973) 101-102.

186. Dijkstra (1998) 278, note 59. – On *dbr/mdbr* as the land of the dead: *arṣ dbr* # *šḥl mmt* in KTU 1.5, V, 18; 6, II, 19-20:" (land of) plague # field of the strand of Death", cf. Hvidberg (1962) 27; on Old Testament passages cf. Haldar (1950) 48-54; Talmon, ThWAT, s.v. *mdbr*, 690-691.

187. Cf. Haldar (1950) 12-13; 17-21; Xella (1973) 102-106.

188. If *mdbr qdš* in the Ugaritic text were to contain a geographical reference, Qadesh in north Syria would be more obvious than the Qadesh desert in the Qadesh – Sinai region, to which Psalm 29 undoubtedly alludes, cf. Loretz (1984) 87-92. – For *ṣêru* and *edin* as being of divine character cf. Haldar (1950) 20-21.

left, but they are not satisfied..."[189] and now on the steppe approach "the Guardian of the sown land", from whom they demand and are given lots of bread and especially wine – this entire scene presupposes that "the steppe" is a non-normal world in which surprising, indeed miraculous things can take place. It is this understanding of *mdbr* that J. Gray comes close to when in his discussion of the very difficult text KTU 1. 12, describing the god Ba'al's sojourn on a dangerous steppe, he remarks that "the desert... may be a ritual desert, Chaos, or the ruin of Cosmos in the temporary recession of Ba'al"[190].

On the background of what has just been stated about the concept *mdbr* and in order to understand what is said in the closing section of the Ugaritic text about "the gracious and beautiful" gods' activities "on the holy steppe" it will be useful to note that the indeed somewhat lacunary introduction of the text (l. 1-7) mentions a connection with the steppe immediately after the invocation of the two gods: "Who have provided a city on high...in the steppe of the barren hilltops" (l. 3-4a), after which the text breaks down until l. 6, which has: "Eat the bread, yes do, drink the foaming wine, yes do"[191]. Thus both quotations right at the beginning of the text suggest exactly the two central themes that dominate the closing section: the steppe with what is implied in this concept ("the *mdbr* theme") and what we might term "the survival theme" in which the wine is the dominant element. That the wine appears to be the main point here is confirmed by the role played in the text as a whole by the ripening of the wine and by the

189. Slightly altered translation in Gibson (1977) 126. – Dijkstra (1998) 278, note 58 rightly points out that the description of de Shaḥar's and Shalim's appetites corresponds exactly to the description of that of Môt , god of death, in KTU 1.5 sqq.; but besides, he observes in connection with the description of the two gods that "the morning and the evening star are usually the last and first star seen in heaven, so the idea is perhaps that the divine twins devour all the stars before disappearing and re-appearing themselves". To this might be added the Revelation of St. John 12, which contains relics of related mythological matter (we shall return to this later); here v. 4 describes how the dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.

190. Gray (1971) 63, note 15.

191. Cf. Pardee (1997) 276; l. 3 could also, with Driver (1956) 121 be translated: "let glory be given to the exalted ones..."

metaphors alluding to wine-growing[192]. With the account in the closing section of how the two gods on the steppe are treated to bread and lots of wine, the text as a whole – the text that we characterized above as “an incantation within a larger framework of a cultic occasion”[193] – is given not only its natural conclusion, but also its rounding off. And the rounding off consists in the fact that the two gods of light whose conception and birth the text describes in the end have to live through and overcome a critical phase in their lives: a sojourn on the steppe for a certain longish period, where their vitality is to be tested and is finally to be confirmed by their receiving – through external help – the necessary food and drink, here bread and lots of wine: “and the guardian of the sown land answers them: (There is bread for him who enters), there is wine for him who enters...let him approach here, his pint of wine, let him fill his companion with wine...” (l. 73-76[194]).

The “survival” theme: the steppe or the desert as a last refuge, where survival depends on the one who takes refuge being given food and drink of a kind that secures his future life, is well known in the Old Testament, and besides the examples already mentioned, Hagar and Ishmael being the most significant ones[195], we may mention the Israelites themselves during the wandering in the wilderness – most succinctly formulated in Psalms 78, 19-25, and 105, 40, where it is said, among other things, that Yahweh gave the people “angels’ food” in the wilderness[196]. But closest to the theme as it appears in the Ugaritic text is the prophecy of the so-called Immanuel sign, Isaiah 7, 14-16, where the prophet endeavours to induce the unbelieving Kingdom of Judah to believe in Yahweh; this purpose is served by the following sign from Yahweh: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Curds and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings”. As pointed out already by Ch. Virolleaud, the editor of the Ugaritic KTU 1.24, in

192. Cf. pp. 50 and 55 and note 145 *supra*.
193. P. 49 *supra*.
194. Cf. Gibson (1977) 127.
195. See p. 64-65 and note 184 *supra*.
196. See for these and other examples Gunkel (1921) 244-248.

the first edition, l. 7 of the text corresponds exactly to the Isaiah text "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son"[197]; what is involved is a fixed cultic and mythological formula, both in the account of a god's wedding and the birth of gods in the Ugaritic text and in the prophecy of Isaiah, which will precisely be a divine sign[198]. And about this child, whose mythical birth is just suggested by the Hebrew text[199], it is said that "curds and honey shall he eat" in a time when the country is empty of people and thus to be compared with a steppe or a desert. And the child's food until he has grown up and can distinguish between good and evil is of a special kind: it has both been used – almost till the present day – as suitable for enabling infants to survive at critical moments, and is well known from the myths of antiquity as food for the children of gods[200]. When according to the Isaiah prophecy the child is to be nourished from "curds and honey", it is due to the fact that during its early life it is exposed to dangers because it lives in a country which for a time becomes empty of people (cf. v. 16) and can thus be compared with a desert or a steppe[201].

Thus, on the background of the Isaiah prophecy and the other Old Testament examples mentioned, it must be asserted that the account in the last section of KTU 1.23 of the sojourn of the two Ugaritic Dioscuri on the steppe after their birth must be viewed on the basis of the "survival" subject or theme, combined with the *mdbr* theme. And Isaiah 7, 14-16 – with "the young woman" (or

197. Virolleaud (1933) 214.
198. Mowinckel (1941) 147; *id.* (1959) 110-116; cf. also Hammershaimb (1966) 13-21.
199. Suggested by the form made definite by the article: *hâ- 'alma* and by the name itself *'immanû-'el*: "God with us", cf. also Mowinckel (1959) 113.
200. Curds or milk and honey have been used till the present day among Arabian bedouin as food for infants who could not have natural nourishment from their mothers, cf. the references in Hammershaimb (1966) 21-22, and Mowinckel (1959) 112, note 8; on milk and honey as food for the children of gods cf. Usener (1888) 177-195.
201. Cf. Mowinckel (1959) 112-113; Hammershaimb (1966) 21-22 varies this, referring to the fact that the mention of "the Promised Land", known from Exodus 3, 8; 17 and elsewhere, as "a land flowing with milk and honey" can now also be found in the description of the land found in the Ugaritic texts, when Ba'al returns to life, and he argues in favour of the view that the Isaiah text does not involve "a common food", but "a choice food", a sense that is thus foreign to the Old Testament passages referred to.

"virgin") who is to conceive and bear a marvellous child – is all the more relevant here when one bears in mind the abovementioned Elusa cult and other passages whose mythology contains the same central element: the Dionysos child *alias* Dushares (= Orotalt/ Ruḍâ), who is borne by "the young woman" or "the virgin", who being a heavenly goddess is of an astral character like her progeny, also called Phosphorus[202]. Both behind the sources of this cult and behind "the young woman" of the Isaiah prophecy there lurks a goddess of an astral character, and this is confirmed by the use of Isaiah 7, 14 sqq. in the Revelation of St. John 12, 1-2; 5-6: as in Isaiah a sign is given, here shown in the sky in the form of "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" – of course to be understood as the zodiac. The woman is with child and cries, "travailing in birth". She bears a boy child who is one day to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but for the time being he is taken up to God, while the woman herself flees into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God.. The reason for the child being taken up to God and for the woman taking to the wilderness is according to v. 3-4 of the chapter the threat from a dragon having seven heads.

As will be seen, the Revelation of St. John, chapter 12, contains mythological ideas of a rather varied background: thus in what has been reported here, a survival of the ancient Semitic myth of the struggle with the seven-headed serpent or dragon, representing the ocean as a power of chaos – now well known also in Ugarit[203]. But in the theme of the Isaiah prophecy: the woman who gives birth to a marvellous child of a divine or marvellous character is expressly described as having the heavenly goddess's attributes in the variant found in the Revelation of St. John, and in the two biblical texts taken together we thus find an echo of what above was called "the *mdbr* theme" and "the survival theme or subject" – and note again: in the two texts viewed together we find a

202. Cf. p. 39-41 *supra*.

203. On the woman as a heavenly goddess (the stars!) cf. Gunkel (1921) 300-301;Kalms (2001) 34-40; for the seven-headed serpent (the dragon) as an independent topic, well known also in Ugarit, cf. Kalms (2001) 49 sqq.; 135-137; Gray (1965) 36; for the relevant Ugaritic texts KTU 1, 2, I-IV, cf. Pardee (1997) 245-249; the newborn child's being taken up to God in heaven is an element from the ideas concerning "the Son of Man", cf. Gunkel (1921) 244-245.

mythological material of an *astral* character – not substantially different from the Ugaritic mythological text describing Shaḥar and Shalim[204].

Before we leave the last section of KTU 1.23, a single feature should be discussed here in some detail. In the passage quoted earlier, l. 67b-68a: "the gracious gods are wandering on the field, they scoured (or: hunted on) the fringes of the steppe" we find two verbs that are used together several times in the Ugaritic texts to signify the act of setting off in order to hunt or look for something. One of the words, from the root *ṣwd*, is known in Classical Hebrew and Ugaritic in the senses: "to hunt, to scour, to traverse" with the sense first mentioned as the most frequent one; as the epithet of the goddess 'Athtarte, Ugaritic uses the word *ṣwdt*: "the hunting 'Athtarte", moreover in relation to the steppe (*mdbr*), and the verb occurs repeatedly with her and the goddess 'Anat as subjects[205].

The description in KTU 1.23 of Shaḥar and Shalim wandering on the field (*šd*) hunting or scouring the fringe of the steppe allows us to see them in a role resembling the one we saw earlier being performed by 'Arṣû/Ruḍâ and the south Arabian 'Athtar in their capacity as a god who protects and accompanies the caravans through desert or steppe[206]. As mentioned earlier, newborn Shaḥar's and Shalim's sojourn on the steppe for a brief period is interpreted as a period during which their abilities and vitality have to undergo a necessary test, which with almost logical necessity *has got to* conclude the celebration of their conception and birth described in the mythical text. A hardening test like that might also be suggested in Isaiah 7, 18, where the child the woman bears has to live in the land empty of people "until he knows how to reject evil and choose good", that is to say: until he achieves the maturity of a man. Provided this interpretation is correct, the two Ugaritic gods' activity on the "holy steppe" can from

204. Cf. Kalms (2001) 36-40.

205. Gesenius-Buhl, s.v. *ṣwd*; DUL II, 778 with references; on "the hunting 'Athtarte" in KTU l. 92, 1-3 (= PRU V, 1) in connection with the steppe, and on both goddesses as hunting goddesses, cf. Hvidberg-Hansen (1979) I, 87 and 109; II, 114, notes 91-92, and p. 151, note 55.

206. See p. 8; 13; 37 and 43-44 *supra*. "The field" (*šd*) in l. 68 of the text is synonymous with *mdbr*, as is occasionally the case in the Old Testament, cf. Talmon, ThWAT, s.v. *mdbr*, 669.

a mythological perspective be seen as a training or education for precisely the previously mentioned function as the companion and protector of the caravans on their way through desert or steppe, a function that in the later Aramaic, north and south Arabian material is ascribed to 'Arṣû/Ruḍâ and 'Athtar. – In relation to this point it is further worth noting that to the cult of the south Arabian 'Athtar, as described above belonged ritual hunting, in the south Arabic texts denoted by the same root *ṣwd/ṣyd* as we have just seen referring to Shaḥar's and Shalim's activity on the steppe or in the field; it should also be noted here that in some Ugaritic texts, among them KTU 1.23, D. Pardee believes that he has found examples of ritual hunting[207].

Of the introductory lines in KTU 1.23, 1-7, and of l. 65b-66a that constitute the transition to the closing l. 66b-76 of the text, it can be asserted that they place the entire sequence of events of the text in what might be called "a sacred landscape": "the steppe of the barren hilltops" where there is "provided a city on high" – in other words a steppe surrounding a town; and this town can hardly be understood in any other way than as the locality where the sacred place of the ritual progress of the text during the autumnal festival is situated – in other words: the town with its temple and the surrounding steppe, *in casu* Ugarit[208]. This "sacred landscape" may be compared with ideas that appear in the Old Testament, of course focusing on the town of Jerusalem in connection with the annual ritual sending away from the temple of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement[209]; we shall return later to this ritual.

But besides the abovementioned Old Testament reminiscences of the myth describing the child of god being borne by "the young

207. Cf. p. 70 *supra*; for *ṣwd/ṣyd* in the relevant texts cf. Beeston (1948) 183-195; Ryckmans (1957) 109-112. – Ritual hunting in Ugaritic texts: Pardee (1997) 275, note 2, with reference to Pardee (1988) 23-35.

208. Thus see the observations in Pardee (1997) 276, note 7. – A corresponding view of the introductory lines in KTU 1.23 is held by de Moor (1987) 118, who, however, performs a far too daring restoration of the lacunary text, where he identifies the concrete town on the steppe with the barren hilltops with Tadmor (Palmyra)! The reader will probably understand how tempting it would be for the author of this article to subscribe to de Moor's suggestion…!

209. Cf. Talmon (1966) 44-45; *id.*, ThWAT, s.v. *mdbr*, p. 691, cf. also p. 674, and p. 64 *supra*.

woman", the heavenly goddess, we find in the Old Testament a text that directly refers to one of the two Ugaritic Dioscuri, Shaḥar, namely in the prophet Isaiah's condemnatory prophecy concerning the King of Babylon, who is now told that he shall be thrown down from his present position as ruler. The text in Isaiah 14, 12-15, is as follows:

12. "How you are fallen from Heaven, o, Hêlel ben Shaḥar!
    How you are cut down to the ground, you who plundering laid the nations low!
13. You said in your heart: "I will ascend to Heaven,
    I will raise my throne above the stars of El,
    I will sit on the Mount of Assembly,
    On the Heights of Ṣaphôn.
14. I will ascend to the ridges of the clouds,
    I will make myself like the Most High ('Elyôn)!"
15. Indeed, you are brought down to the Realm of Death (She'ôl),
    to the depths of the Pit"[210].

Ever since the Ugaritic finds were made, it has been clear that Isaiah 14, 12-15, contains ideas, words or concepts for which there exist such obvious parallels in the mythological texts describing the god Ba'al that a detailed demonstration of this seems unnecessary here[211]. There is, however, one essential element among the relationships that scholars have wished to see between the Isaiah text and the Ba'al texts, but an element that does not immediately prove correct: that Hêlel ben Shaḥar's fall is a close mythological parallel to the Ugaritic text (KTU 1.6, I) that gives an account of how the god 'Athtar after Ba'al's death attempts to usurp Ba'al's throne, but has to resign and give up his plan. It is true that the text in question makes 'Athtar's attempt to gain Ba'al's throne and royal power turn out a failure, but about 'Athtar's attempt to seat himself on Ba'al's throne the text expressly states that "his feet do not reach the footstool, his head does not reach the top (of the seat)", after which he pronounces:

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210. The English translation is based on Løkkegaard (1956) 71-72, where the verb *ḥlš* (v. 12 b) is translated on the basis of Arabic *khls*: "to plunder", because the parallelism with v. 12 a does not agree with Hebrew *ḥlš*: "to be weak".
211. See Grelot (1956) 18-48.

"I will not be king on the heights of Saphôn! Thereupon 'Athtar descends from the seat of the mighty Ba'al, and rules over the earth, god of it all"[212]. Thus no violent throwing down of 'Athtar is involved, but a voluntary resigned descent to a more modest rule. But when P. Craigie, one of those advocating the affinity of the Isaiah text to the 'Athtar episode, adduces as a modification that it is in his capacity as the deity of the morning star (the Venus star) that 'Athtar is thrown down, and sees "Hêlel ben Shaḥar" together with the Ugaritic Shalim as hypostases of 'Athtar[213], then this modification approaches the understanding of Hêlel ben Shaḥar" conveyed by the Septuagint and the Vulgate through their rendering of this god's name by "Eosphóros" and "Lucifer" respectively, which, as repeatedly mentioned above, are designations of the morning star. The name "Hêlel, son of Dawn", *hêlel ben šaḥar* in the Hebrew text, is taken by Craigie to mean "'Athtar *in descent*": The name ben Shaḥar is thus not an indication of genealogy, but an emphasis on descent"[214]. With this interpretation Craigie approaches the interpretation that will be adhered to in what follows, according to which Isaiah 14, 12-15 contains, not an allusion to the Ugaritic 'Athtar, whose function as an astral deity in Ugarit is uncertain, as already mentioned[215], but an allusion to the morning star as we know it from Ugarit under the name Shaḥar, and in the Aramaic and Greco-Roman material under the name 'Azîzû/Azizos.

Among the points that have caused trouble for the interpreters of Isaiah 14, 12-15 is the meaning of the name itself, "Hêlel ben Shaḥar" (*hêlêl ben šaḥar*). As for "Hêlel", the meaning is quite obvious: the Hebrew verb *hll* means "to light, shine", to which corresponds Akkadian *ellu, ellitu* "bright, shining"[216]. The following *ben* = "son" has often been understood genealogically as meaning "son of". But if with P. Craigie and others we choose to understand the word as an indication of "a matter of relation", in good

212. See the survey describing the attempts of various scholars to place Isaiah 14, 12-15 in a relationship partly with 'Athtar in the Ugaritic texts, partly with the Greek myths of Phaeton, son of Eos, the dawn: Loretz (1976) 133-134. – For the passages in KTU 1.6, I, 59-65 about 'Athtar, cf. Pardee (1997) 269.

213. Craigie (1973) 223-224.

214. Craigie (1973) 224, cf. also Loretz (1976) 133.

215. See p. 15 *supra* (sidetal rettes senere!)

216. HAL 1, 235, cf. p. 238: Arabic *hll*: "am Horizont erscheinen".

accord with a common Semitic use of the designation of "son" (for instance Arabic *ibn*) or "father" (for instance Arabic *abû*) to indicate a person's relationship with a thing or matter[217], *in casu* with the word "shaḥar" (which besides being a proper name can also generally mean "morning light, the dawn"[218]) – then "Hêlel ben Shaḥar" quite simply means "the Shining One, Shaḥar"[219]. This interpretation of the name renders superfluous all attempts to establish a genealogical relationship between "Hêlel" and Shaḥar. Isaiah 14, 12-15 quite simply points to Shaḥar, known as a deity from other passages of the Old Testament, too[220].

If after this, on the basis of this understanding of the god's name we read Isaiah 14, 12-15, the text allows us to see a reminiscence of the idea of an attempt on the part of an astral god of a lower rank than El 'Elyôn to place himself above El, who in the Ugaritic pantheon is indisputably the supreme god – a position that appears from several Old Testament passages, perhaps most clearly in Deuteronomy 32, 8 that describes "the time when 'Elyôn allotted their possessions, divided men up, and determined the territories of the nations according to the number of the gods (or: the sons of God)"[221]. It must be assumed that "the sons of God" are here, as for instance in the Book of Job 38, 7, identical with the stars (here they are even called "the morning stars"[222]). So when Shaḥar according to the Isaiah prophecy is destined to fall, this fall is the punishment that El 'Elyôn will inflict on the morning star because he wants to exalt himself higher – not only

217. Cf. Wright (1964) II, 203. – Besides Craigie, du Mesnil du Buisson, too, (1970) xviii, has observed that Hebrew *ben* in Isaiah 14, 12 here does not indicate more than "une affinité".

218. Cf. McKay (1970) 457.

219. Cf. thus Watson, DDD, 746: *hêlel* means "the Shining, Brilliant One".

220. Cf. the survey in McKay (1970) 457-459. – On the very obscure Psalm 110, 3, which could probably best be rendered: "on holy mountains I have begotten you, from mother's womb, before Shaḥar and the Dew", cf. Otzen, ThWAT, s.v. *Ṭl*. That Shaḥar in the Old Testament is often feminine as the name of a god is easily explained from the previously mentioned doubleness characterizing the names of the Venus star, cf. pp. 36-38; 42 *supra*.

221. Cf. Eissfeldt (1956) 28-29. The "sons of Israel" found in the Masoretic text, Deuteronomy 32, 8, is a later theologically determined alteration of the original "sons of God (El)", as appears from both the Septuagint, Vetus Latina and now also from the Qumrân fragments, cf. Eissfeldt, (1956) 28, note 1.

222. Cf. Gunkel (1922) 55-56.

above the other stars, but above El himself. The scepticism that according to the Book of Job 25, 5 El harbours towards the stars and the moon can be explained from the ideas underlying Isaiah 14, 12-15. This is undoubtedly also true of the wording in the Book of Job 15. 15, which states about El that "he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight"[223]. Here "saints" is a designation of "the angels", but a designation that can also – on the basis of Genesis 6, 1-4 where Hebrew *bnê hâ-'elôhîm*, "sons of God" is rendered in the Septuagint by "the angels" (*hoi aggeloi*) – refer to the astral powers; this is the same interpretation of "the sons of God" as in later Jewish interpretation[224]. Below we shall take a closer look at how this astral meaning of "the angels" is expressed in the pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch, chs. 6-11 and 86-88.

In conclusion it may be stated about Shaḥar's role in Isaiah 14, 12-15 that it is hardly by accident that it is precisely Shaḥar who, with his position as the powerful morning star, paving the way for the sunrise, feels strong enough (cf. the meaning of his Aramaic name) to challenge El, the Highest One ('Elyôn). It is not without reason that in the Aramaic and the Greco-Latin material Shaḥar is called 'Azîzû/Azizos, "the Strong One". But El is the stronger one, as indeed this is expressed in a Ugaritic text: "There exists no power in comparison (over against) the Gracious, El, the Kindly One"[225].

But the condemnatory prophecy of Isaiah could not lay the idea of the rebellious or ill-mannered astral deities. A testimony to this, as clear as it is brief, is the saying of Jesus in the Gospel according to St. Luke 10, 18, undoubtedly with an allusion to Isaiah 14, 12 sqq.: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven", which is a confirmatory answer to the disciples' happy report that "the demons are subjected to us through Your name". We have here a classical example showing how a deity, originally worshipped and honoured, is changed into his negative contrast, becoming a

223. Oldenburg (1970) 205-206.

224. Cf. Gunkel, l. c.; on "the sons of God" in Genesis 6, 1 sq. as angels and as stars in late Jewish interpretation see for instance Rabbi Eliezer, Pirqê, ch. 26, Friedländer (1916/1970) 160-161.

225. KTU l. 24, 44-45, cf. Løkkegaard (1956) 58.

Satan figure[226]. But if we pursue this subject further in Jewish apocalyptic and exegetical (rabbinic) literature, we shall find additional and corresponding examples that seem to have at least one of the astral gods, 'Azîzû/Azizos, as their mythological background.

* * *

The apocalyptic First Book of Enoch, whose oldest parts presumably date back to at least the third century BC, contains two sections which among other things treat of divine figures who are condemned owing to unruliness or disobedience to God. The first section contains chapters 1-36, in what follows called (as does J. T. Milik) The Book of the Watchers, which since the first half of the second century BC has existed in its present form in its Greek and Ethiopic versions[227]. The second section, chapters 83-90, The Book of Dreams, has as its *terminus ante quem* the year 164 BC, but literarily and as far as the contents are concerned it is strongly dependent on The Book of the Watchers[228].

Chapters 6-11 present an account of the rebellion and the punishment of Shemîḥazâ ("My (i. e. God's) Name has seen"), the highest-ranking of "the angels" or "God's sons", who together with ten other named leaders, among them Asael or 'Azazel, has sexual relations with the daughters of men, and each of whom later teaches their children various skills. Thus 'Azazel teaches his offspring how to make especially swords and knives, shields and breastplates, but also gems and dyes (ch. 8, 1-2). The account is of course based on Genesis 6, 1-4, but heavily elaborated, with the addition of other literary matter in the way that is well known from the Targum and Midrash genres[229]. Among the material added are the detailed descriptions of how Shemîḥazâ and 'Azazel

226. As a corresponding example may be mentioned the strange god in KTU 1.114, 19-20: *ḥby b'l qrnm ḏnb* that can be translated: "*Ḥby*, the one with horn and tail", whom the editor of the text calls "une préfiguration de Satan", Virolleaud (1968) 550.

227. Milik (1976) 22-24, where it is also pointed out that the earliest known allusion to The Book of the Watchers is an Aramaic fragment of Testimonium Levi 8, iii, 7-8 (4QTest. Levi) from the second century BC.

228. Milik (1976) 24; 43-44.

229. Cf. Hanson (1977) 195-197.

are punished, and it is round these two main culprits that the entire account centres; it may be divided into two parallel sequences: the Shemîḥazâ Narrative, extended or elaborated with the 'Azazel topic as it is known from Leviticus 16: the sending out of a scapegoat to 'Azazel in the desert[230]. But that 'Azazel does not play a secondary role appears clearly from two things: first from the circumstance that he is the first to be punished, which is accounted for in detail in ch. 10, 4-7, after which a brief account is given of the punishment of Shemîḥazâ in v. 11; next from the fact that the punishment, repeatedly described in the Book of Dreams, chs. 86-88, is said to overtake 'Azazel only[231].

What the First Book of Enoch says about 'Azazel's nature or character is quite clear from ch. 86, 1, where Enoch describes his vision: "And I watched again with my eyes while I slept, and I saw the sky above, and lo, a star fell from the sky, and it rose and ate and grazed among these bulls" (mentioned in v. 3 sqq.); and v. 3 goes on: "And I had a vision again, and I looked at the sky, and lo, I saw many stars fall down and rush from the sky down to that first star". In ch. 87 four archangels are mentioned in the form of "white people", and in ch 88, 1 we then read: "And I saw one of the four who had come out first, and he took the first star that had fallen from the sky and bound it hand and foot and threw it into an abyss..." From the first mention of the punishment of the star in ch. 10, 4 sqq.: "And the Lord said then to Rafa'el: "Bind 'Azazel's hand and foot and throw him into darkness, and open the wilderness which is in Dudaêl and throw him out there", it becomes evident that 'Azazel in chs. 86-88 is a now fallen god of an astral character. And it is as obvious that behind the passages quoted are the Isaiah prophecy, ch. 14, 12 sqq., and the description of the scapegoat, Leviticus 16.

To the rituals surrounding the Autumnal Feast or the Feast of Tabernacles and the New Year's Feast in the temple of Jerusalem there belonged in post-Exilic times the Day of Atonement, when it was the duty of the high priest to see to the annual expiatory

230. For the analysis of the First Book of Enoch 6-11 and the two, partly parallel, accounts see Hanson (1977) 197-204; 220-227, and Nickelsburg (1977) 383-405.

231. Cf. Nickelsburg (1977) 398, note 65.

removal of the sins of the people over the past year[232]. According to Leviticus 16, 7-19 the high priest shall take two he-goats and cast lots on both of them, one lot "to Yahweh", the other "to 'Aza'zel"; the first shall be sacrificed as a lustration, the second, "to 'Aza'zel", shall be presented alive before Yahweh "to perform expiation upon it by sending it to 'Azaz'el into the wilderness"[233].

Concerning the question as to who or what 'Aza'zel is, three answers have been given on the basis of philological arguments: 1) a geographical designation: "a rough and stony place"[234], 2) a combination of the Hebrew terms *'ezz*: "goat" and *'ôzel*: "go away", i. e. "goat that goes (away)", 3) the name of a demon or a false god. But against both the first two explanations it has often been objected, and with justice, that the parallelism in the indication of the two lots, "to Yahweh" and "to 'Aza'zel" in Leviticus 16, 8 clearly speaks in favour of 'Aza'zel being "a personal name, behind which could be posited something such as a "supernatural being" or "demonic personality""[235]. Indeed it is the abovementioned third explanation that finds substantial support in Jewish commentaries on both Leviticus 16 and Genesis 6, 1 sq. Thus Rabbi Ishmael (Babyl. Talmud, Yoma 67b): "'Azazel (it was so called) because it

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232. On the content of the Autumnal Feast (the Feast of Tabernacles and the New Year's Feast) in pre- and post-Exilic times see Pedersen (1959) III-IV, 419-447, and Milgrom (1991) 1070-1071.

233. Cf. Milgrom (1991) 1009; several scholars, among them Loretz (1985) 51-52, assert that the phrase "to 'Azazel" (*la 'âzâ 'zel)* in v. 10 b only indicates a proprietorship that rules out the he-goat being sent to 'Azazel staying in the wilderness, with reference to the use of the preposition *l* in v. 7 to indicate the lots "to Yahweh" and "to 'Azazel". But the use of the preposition to indicate proprietorship in v. 7 does not rule out the same preposition in v. 10 being used locatively; the word *ham-midberâ* (with locative *–â-locale*) which here follows immediately after *la-'âzâzel* can be as naturally interpreted to mean "to 'Azazel, over to (in) the wilderness"; thus, too, according to Noth (1966) 98:"damit man ihn (den Bock) für Azazel in die Wüste hinausschicke". It is not without interest that Targum Neofiti and Temple Scroll (11QT 26, 13) renders Leviticus 16, 10 b: "to send it (the he-goat) to Azazel to the desert" (*l'z 'zl lmdbrh*), while Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, like Mishna Yoma 67 b and Midrash *Sifre, Ahare Mot* 2, 8 interprets "Azazel" locatively: "a rough and stony place", cf. McNamara-Maher (1994) 62-63; 167 and note 29; Tawil (1980) 44; Yadin (1983) II, 118..

234. Cf. note 233.

235. See Janowski, DDD, 241-242 for the explanations listed, cf. also Milgrom (1991) 1020-1021.

obtains the atonement for the affairs of 'Uza and 'Azel", on which Rashi has the following comment: "'Uza and 'Azel are demonic angels who came down to the earth in the days of Na'ama, the sister of Tubal Qain", with reference to Genesis 6[236], and in Rabbi Eliezer, Midrash Pirqé, 'Aza'zel is explained as Sammael ("the devil") or Satan[237]. We note here that the two leading rebellious angels who in the First Book of Enoch are called Shemîḥazâ and Asael or 'Azazel are called 'Uza and 'Azel in the texts just quoted; they are designated by the same names in Yoma 67b, and in a manuscript that is a variant of Midrash Shemîḥazâ and 'Aza'el we find the forms 'Uzzâ and 'Uzza'el[238]. But with these forms of the names as a background the time has come to clarify the meaning of the name 'Azazel in Leviticus 16 in relation to the two gods of light, of course 'Azîzû/Azizos in particular.

In the Masoretic rendering of the name *'z 'zl* the letter *'Alef* after the first *zayn* is either vowelless or used as a vowel letter for the long vowel *â*, while in Syriac Peshitta *'Alef* follows the last *zayn*, thus: *'zz 'yl*, where *yôd* is clearly a vowel letter indicating a long *ê*. 'Azaz'el is thus to be understood as a theophoric name, one element of which is common Semitic *'l*, "God" or (as a proper name) 'El, and it is in this way that the name has essentially been seen both in Jewish commentaries and in the Ethiopic First Book of Enoch[239]. That "'Azaz'el" thus contains the root *'zz*: "to be strong", and *'l*: "God" is also confirmed by the previously mentioned variant "'Uzza'el", to which it can be added that *'zz* is well known

236. Cf. Tawil (1980) 45-46.
237. Pirqê, chs. 14 and 46, Friedländer (1916/1970) 99; 363-364, and Tawil (1980) 46.
238. See Milik (1976) 331-332 (Oxford MS 2340, §§ 17-19); for four sources of Midrash Shemîḥazâ and 'Aza'el, *ibid.*, 321-331; Milik observes (p. 330) that "the two chiefs of the wicked angels, 'Uzza and 'Aza'el, are often quoted in Talmudic and Cabbalistic texts, e. g. in Yoma 67 b, Pesiqta Rabbati, ch. 34, and, later in the Zohar and in the Hebrew book of Enoch. However, they are not, at the very least formally, identical with Shemîhaza and 'Aza'el of our midrash" – maybe not formally, but really!
239. The Masoretic text and its Syriac variant: see BH.K, Leviticus 16, 8, and Wyatt (1976) 428-429, who in agreeing with M. H. Segal assumes that the Masoretic form of the name was intended to disguise the original meaning of the name,"demon"; for the name, written *'zz 'l* or *'s'l* in Jewish literature, including Qumrân, and in the Ethiopic First Book of Enoch, see Strobel (1987) 165; Tawil (1980) 58-59, and Milik (1976) 153; 156.

as an element in other personal and place names in the Old Testament as for instance 'Azzayahû (1 Chronicles 15, 23) and Bêt-'azmawet (Nehemiah 7, 28, where undoubtedly *mawet* is originally the name of the Ugaritic god of death Môt)[240]. With further reference to Ugaritic and Phoenician names of gods like *'zb'l* in the list of gods KTU 1.102, 27 and other names in which *'l* forms a part, it can probably with O. Loretz be established of "die Azazel Gestalt" that "von diesem Hintergrund her wird es somit deutlich, dass in der Spätfase der Entwicklung und vom Standpunkt des sicheren nachexilischen Monotheismus aus, eine Figur aus dem Bereich der niederen Götter...im Judentum notwendig zu einem guten oder bösen Dämon werden musste"[241]. On the background of this quotation it is as relevant as it is remarkable that as competent a connoisseur of late Jewish literature and mythology as H. Grünbaum as early as in 1877 – when 'Azîzû/Azizos as the name of a god was as yet only known from the previously mentioned treatise by the Emperor Julian and from the abovementioned Latin inscriptions from Dacia, and as one of Allah's 99 "beautiful names" – adduced Azizos to account for the name 'Aza'zel in Leviticus 16; and as an argument in favour of 'Azaz'el's character of "ein in einen Dämon verwandelter Gott" Grünbaum adduced Arabic *'azîz* and the Syriac name of the god Azizos in Edessa[242].

Now it might be objected against the explanation of the name 'Azaz'el as being identical with 'Azîz(û) that the Hebrew name must necessarily mean "Strong (is) God (or: El") or "God's (or: El's) strength" analogously with the previously mentioned Ugaritic and Phoenician *'zb'l*: "Strength of Ba'al" and Old Testament

240. See Milgrom (1991) 1021, and Tawil (1980) 58.

241. Loretz (1985) 57, Strobel (1987) 166 concurring, and quoted by Janowski-Wilhelm (1993) 132-133, who, however, referring to the fact that the Ugaritic material contains texts of a different category and with another ritual purpose than Leviticus 16, wants to explain the name 'Azaz'el on the basis of Hurrian-Akkadian sacrificial terms; but irrespective of possible similarities between the South Anatolian-North Syriac text material referred to concerning purification rites and Leviticus 16, as evident a Semitic explanation of the name 'Azaz'el as the one mentioned above must *a priori* carry greater weight. In this connection it must also be considered that the topic involving the rebellion of the gods (which some have argued has been borrowed from the Prometheus myth) can very well be understood as a genuine Semitic myth, cf. the remarks in Hanson (1977) 225, note 58; 226-227.

242. Grünbaum (1877) 250; 328, referring to M. A. Levy, ZDMG 18 (1864) 108.

"'Azzayahû", which means "Yahweh is strong"[243]. But here it must be taken into consideration that the Masoretic form in Leviticus 16 must, as mentioned, be assumed to be a deliberate distortion, for the purpose of disguising what was originally the name of a god[244]; but since it must further be assumed that it was not the name of El, identical with Yahweh, that it was intended to distort, but on the contrary the deity that receives strength from El, it will be natural to assume that the form 'Azaz'el cloaks an originally Syriac-Aramaic *'Azzez'el: "God (or: El) gives strength"; if so, '*azzez* is the internsive perfect, well known in Classical Syriac in the sense of *fortiter se gessit, roboravit*[245]. This explanation will be the more natural since in the Ugaritic mythological text KTU 1.23 we have seen that El is the progenitor of the two Canaanite and later Syrian astral gods Shaḥar and Shalim *alias* 'Azîzû/Azizos and 'Arṣû-Mun'îm/Monimos[246]. What would be more to be expected than that the strong morning star was assigned a name that confirms from whom he has his strength? – But as we have seen in Isaiah 14, 12 sqq., etc., he did not realize that the god who granted him this also had to impose a limit to this strength and therefore let him fall or had him sent to a place where his strength could no more be exercised.

With 'Azaz'el identified as the fallen morning star, to whom according to Leviticus 16, 10, 21-22 a he-goat is sent in the desert

243. Cf. Noth (1928/1966) 190; Pardee (2000) I, 530, and Benz (1972) 374-375.

244. Cf. note 239 *supra*.

245. Cf. Payne-Smith (1901-29) 2847 on the root *'zz*. – For the interpretation of the name 'Azaz'el proposed here see also Cheyne (1895) 155: "Obviously Azazel contains the divine name El, not less than Kokabiel, Tamiel, Danel, and the rest. The spelling may seem to be against this, but the form was deliberately altered from 'Azaz'el "God strengtheneth" (cf. 'Azazyahû 1 Chr. XV, 21), out of reverence, to conceal the true derivation of the *fallen* angel's name". – Alternatively 'Azaz 'el (*'zz 'l*) could be explained as a substantive (*'azaz*) in status constructus to 'El (*'l*): "El's Strong One" as an epithet of the morning star.

246. Cf. also Gaster (1966) 412, who, quoting El's words, Psalm 82, 6-7: "I said, Gods are ye. And all of you beings celestial; howbeit, like men shall ye die, and like one of the Princes fall!", places "the heavenly Twins", Shaḥar and Shalim, in relation to 'Azazel and Asael in the First Book of Enoch, observing that "Moreover, in the rabbinic literature, the two ousted angels are called 'Azza and 'Azael – names which connect with the Palmyrene 'Azizu ("strong") as an epithet of Castor".

or steppe (*mdbr*), we are led back to the role that we have seen is assigned to the steppe in KTU 1.23: with its "barren hilltops" (l. 4) and its "stones and stocks" (l. 66a) the steppe is, so to speak, the framework in which the text places the entire sequence of events. On the steppe sacrifices are offered after the birth of the two "gracious and beautiful" gods (l. 65b), after which they are described as "wandering on the field, scouring (or: hunting) on the fringes of the steppe" (l. 67b-68a). Further we established that the steppe is the scene of the two gods' "survival" in the sense that it is here that they are given the food and wine that satisfy their voracious appetites (l. 61b-64 and 73-76). Finally, referring to l. 3-4a: "who have provided a city on high...in the steppe of the barren hilltops..." we believed that it was possible to establish what we termed "a sacred landscape", i. e. a town with its surrounding steppe, and at the same time it was pointed out how both *mdbr* and the corresponding Akkadian designations *ṣêru* and *edin* can include the concept "Netherworld"[247]. Thus it is to a "landscape" like that and to a locality, *mdbr*, with which is associated a highly complex set of meanings, that KTU 1.23 and Leviticus 16 transport both Shaḥar-Shalim and 'Azaz'el. And if we turn to details in Leviticus and in the post-biblical mythological material dealing with 'Azaz'el, we shall find elements that seem to reflect elements from older Semitic mythology as it is known from Ugarit, among other places.

In Leviticus 16, 22 the steppe to which the scapegoat is sent to 'Azaz'el is characterized in detail through Hebrew *'æræṣ gezêrâ*; with *gzr* meaning "to cut (off)" it can be translated "a cut-off land"; in other versions it is rendered by "uninhabitable", "desolate" or "uncultivated"[248]. Some Jewish commentaries interpret the word as a designation of "a rough and rocky terrain"[249]. To the last-mentioned interpretation can be added a sense of the name Dûdâ'êl, which the Ethiopic First Book of Enoch 10, 4 with the sentence "and open the desert, which is in Dûdâ'el" indicates as the place into which 'Azaz'el is to be thrown as punishment for his rebellion. For from the variant "Daduel" and the rendering in Mishna Yoma VI, 8 through "Bêt-Hadêdûn" (a corruption of *bêt haddûdû*)

247. See p. 63-67.
248. Cf. HAL I, 180; Milgrom (1991) 1020.
249. Milgrom (1991) 1045-1046; Tawil (1980) 43-44, cf. note 233 *supra*.

the name Dûdâ'êl can be explained as "ein Landschaft mit typischen Bergspitzen" (as it is known for instance in Judea)[250]; tending towards the same interpretation is the meaning proposed by J. T. Milik, where "Daduel" is read as "Daddu'el", which on the basis of Aramaic *dada* "breast" is explained as "the (two) breasts of 'El" – the exact replica of the Akkadian *Mašû*, "twin mountains", the mountain which "looks upon the sun as its setting and as its rising", with reference to Mesopotamian cylinder-seals showing the astral deity appearing between the two twin mountain peaks[251]. Corresponding to the steppe (*mdbr*) as such a rocky and trackless terrain we have an exact parallel in the landscape *mdbr* in the Ugaritic text with its "barren hilltops" and "the midst of the holy steppe" with its "stones and stocks". The fact that the steppe in l. 65 is called "holy" is not incompatible with the steppe being an excommunicated or "unclean" place, for in the view of antiquity "holy-unclean" and "profane-clean" are two parallel pairs of concepts, or two aspects of the same phenomenon?[252]; this also explains that during the Babylonian New Year's Feast the priest, after having presided over the purification of the god Nabû's chapel in the temple, on the fifth Nisan has to make his way out to the steppe (*ṣêru*) and remain there until Nabû returns to his temple[253].

In connection with the final observations concerning what we called "the sacred landscape", in which the entire sequence of events in the text KTU 1.23 takes place, it was briefly suggested that this scenery is comparable with the Old Testament ideas which, with the temple of Jerusalem in the centre, are associated with the annual sending away of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement[254]; we can now establish that with the identification of 'Azaz'el as a demonized, originally astral god *alias* 'Azîzû/Shaḥar

250. Strobel (1987) 147-151; Hanson (1977) 223-224; Nickelsburg (1977) 401-402; on the Ethiopic First Book of Enoch, ch. 10, 4, see Charles (1906) 26, and Milik (1976) 30.
251. Milik (1976) 29-30, with Strobel (1987) 150-151 concurring; for examples of cylinder-seal pictures with the astral god between two mountain peaks, see ANEP (3rd ed.), figs. 683 and 685.
252. See the parallelisms Leviticus 10, 10; Ezekiel 22, 26 and 44, 23, cf. Pedersen (1929) III-IV, 270-271; 331-332.
253. Cf. Thureau-Dangin (1921/1975) 141; Zimmern (1926) 10-11.
254. P. 64 *supra*.

we have in Leviticus 16 reminiscences related to the Ugaritic text. And that the ritual in Leviticus 16 really contained acts which – as is the case in the Ugaritic text – emanated from the temple, but from here led to the landscape is indicated in v. 21-22 and 26 that prescribe what is in practice to be done with the scapegoat when it is sent into the desert in charge of a particular trusted man, who after having carried out this part of the ritual has to purify himself before returning. From the Babylonian Talmud tract Yoma, which in great detail lays down the precise rules describing how and where in the landscape outside Jerusalem the scapegoat is to be led one is given the clear impression that the ritual in Leviticus 16 really presupposes a town with its temple and surrounding landscape[255]. But as appears from M. Noth's interpretation, it is natural to assume that the very part of the chapter that deals with the scapegoat had an independent role in relation to the other precepts of the chapter, and that "der Ritus mit den zwei Ziegenböcken ursprünglich an einem Kulturlandheiligtum beheimatet gewesen ist, das in erreichbarer Nähe eine "Wüste" hatte"[256]. If so, we have to do with a ritual which only later became part of the Jerusalem Yahweh cult, and in the course of this process it is probable that the scapegoat was identified with the morning star 'Azîzû/Azizos or Shaḥar, who according to the Old Testament (Isaiah 14, 12 sqq.) was already then on the way to being considered a rebellious, demonic figure.

In the mythological material revolving round the topic 'Azaz'el and the other rebellious, but fallen astral deities there are another couple of features that could probably be related both to KTU 1.23 and to the previously mentioned cult in connection with the morning and evening star (Lucifer, Orotalt-Ruḍâ-Dushares-Dionysos) and the heavenly goddess ("the young girl or the virgin", Aphrodite).

In his well documented article "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11" Paul D. Hanson ob-

255. For the precepts in Mishna Yoma see the account and comments in Strobel (1985) 144-146. – Examples of cultic feasts in local shrines, where part of the feast (the women's dancing) took place in the adjoining vineyards, are the wine harvest feasts in Sichem (Judges 9, 27) and Shiloh (Judges 21, 19-21), see Pedersen (1929) 418-419; 742-743.

256. Noth (1966) 106-107, endorsed by Strobel (1987) 143-144, notes 13-14.

serves that "comparative data would suggest that Azazel was originally more than a desert location to which a scapegoat was sent, but was instead a god (or a demon) perhaps consigned to the netherworld and appearing in desert places, to whom sacrifices had to be made to placate a malevolent disposition and satisfy a voracious appetite"[257] – as will be seen, a view that on the whole corresponds to what has just been adduced concerning the phenomenon of 'Azaz 'el. As an additional "comparative datum" we may add, to the others referred to from the Ugaritic text, the previously quoted description in l. 61b-64 and 73-76 of the two young gods' "voracious appetites" during their wandering on the steppe[258]. For a parallel to this feature can be traced in the second section (The Book of Dreams) of the account in the Book of Enoch, chs. 86-88, describing the fall of the rebellious astral gods; here it is said about 'Azaz 'el, ch. 86, 1: "And again I saw with mine eyes as I slept, and I saw the heaven above, and behold a star fell from heaven, *and it arose and eat and pastured amongst these oxen*". After this there follows in ch. 88, 1-2 the description of the star's fall into an abyss. This description – as a characteristic of apocalyptic texts – contains elements taken from widely differing ideas, here the well-known animal symbolism that is also known from Ezekiel and Daniel, though here, in 1 Enoch 86-88, it has not been used with complete consistency[259]. But the topic of "the voracious appetites", depicted in such strong colours in the Ugaritic text, seems with the description of 'Azaz 'el's fate in the Book of Enoch to have been given a late literary manifestation. And in connection with this topic it should also be observed that when the bread and above all the wine, its ripening and its use – as accounted for in detail above – play a major role in the Ugaritic text[260], it is worth noting that this "Dionysian" topic was also related to the Day of Atonement. For according to Mishna Ta'anith IV, 26b it was the custom, on the day *before* the Day of Atonement when the scapegoat was sent out on the steppe to 'Azaz 'el, for the young unmarried women in Jerusalem to go out into the neighbouring vineyards and dance, shouting: "Young

257. Hanson (1977) 222.
258. P. 49; 67 and 82 *supra*.
259. For the translation and animal symbolism see Charles (1912) 186-187.
260. Cf. p. 49-50 and 56-57; 66-67 *supra*.

man, lift up thine eyes and see what thou choosest!"[261]. Irrespective of the fact that this custom was originally a central element of the Autumnal Feast and the Feast of Tabernacles which in post-Exilic times became a New Year's Feast followed by the Day of Atonement and by the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23, 23-26), it is worth noting that according to Mishna it is as an introduction to the Day of Atonement that the dancing in the vineyards takes place.

It thus seems evident that in all of this great complex of biblical and extra-biblical ideas associated with the 'Azaz 'el figure there are elements that can be traced as far back to pre-Israelite times as the close of the second millennium BC, to which period the Ugaritic texts are dated. But here it is important to stick to the fact that it is especially round 'Azaz 'el *alias* Azizos/'Azîzû as an astral, but fallen deity that the entire complex of the mythological ideas mentioned is grouped. As a final point, this is confirmed by what is said in various late Jewish texts in relation to the other one of the two most prominent figures among the fallen angels or "God's sons", Shemîḥazâ.

From Qumrân Cave 4 we know a Jewish-Aramaic document which owing to its relation to a Manichaean work of the same name has been given the title "The Book of the Giants", and it belongs to the same scroll as contains the Book of Enoch; from the fragments preserved it can be gathered that the abovementioned Shemîḥazâ and his son Ahyah here take up a central role[262]. In late Jewish Talmudic and Midrashic literature there exist several references to or brief variants of "The Book of the Giants", thus from Midrashic literature a Midrash about Shemîḥazâ and 'Azaz 'el, preserved in four manuscripts[263]. In this text there appears a woman called 'Estêra, whom Shemîḥazâ attempts to seduce, but he is rebuffed, for which reason she is raised to the firmament and is seated in the group of seven stars, the Pleiades; in a Midrashic variant the woman, who is here referred to as

261. On Mishna Ta'anîth IV, 26 b see Epstein (1938) 139; Pedersen (1959) III-IV, 742.
262. See Milik (1976) 57-58; 299-300; Beyer (1984) 268-269 dates the manuscript to the first century BC. – Stuckenbruck (2000) 8-10 hesitates about the relationship between the Book of Giants and the Book of Enoch.
263. Milik (1976) 321-329.

betûlâ, i. e. a young marriageable woman ("virgin"), is taken up as Virgo in the zodiac[264]. It was recognized long ago that the name 'Estêra conceals the name of 'Ashtarte as an astral goddess (Venus)[265]; it is also obvious that here we have to do with the very same mythological ideas that were mentioned above in connection with Isaiah 7, 14 sqq. and the Revelation of St. John 12, 1-2; 5-6: the young woman *alias* the heavenly goddess (Aphrodite-'Ashtarte) who bears the child of god – i. e. what is recounted of Dionysos-Orotalt (Ruḍâ), Phosphorus-Lucifer-Azizos and their Ugaritic forerunners, Shaḥar and Shalim[266].

* * *

Before we can arrive at a final summary of the reflections proposed, which as their point of departure had the two young gods 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû, we shall comment on a text that chronologically is approximately midway between 'Arṣû-'Azîzû of the Hellenistic period and Shaḥar and Shalim of the 14th to 13th centuries.

Among the monumental inscriptions known from the antique town of Y'DY/Sam'al, now a small village called Zinjirli, situated on the eastern side of the Amanus mountains in east Turkey, not far from the Syrian-Turkish frontier, there was found in 1890 in Gercin, situated about 7 km northeast of Zinjirli, a colossal statue of the god Hadad. The inscription, which is seen on the front of the statue, is both a dedication to Hadad from King Panamuwa I and a memorial inscription for the King, and it is dated to ca. 750 BC[267]. The inscription, here cited as KAI, 214, is one of several Aramaic and Phoenician inscriptions from and near Zinjirli and is written in archaic north Syriac Aramaic, but with clear "Canaanisms"; unlike the other Aramaic inscriptions from this area, the dialect in this and in two others (KAI, 25 and 215) has

264. Milik (1976) 327; 330-331; on the fragmentary variant Sefer Hadar Zeqenim, where the virgin is taken up as Virgo into the zodiac: Milik (1976) 333; Ginzberg (1998) V, 169, and Jellinek (1938) xxxix; 156.
265. Cf. Grünbaum (1877) 226-229, who also points out that 'Ashtarte (Ishtar) is viewed here both as the Venus star and as belonging to the Pleiades, which he explains as influence from Greek mythology; on this point see also Milik (1976) 330-331.
266. Cf. p. 39-41; 16; and 51-54 *supra*.
267. Cf. Tropper (1993) 2-18; Genge (1979) I, 143-144; II, Abb. 104.

been classified as "Ya 'udic" or "Sam 'alic"[268]. Together with other historical material (especially Assyrian texts) these text finds testify to an originally Hittite city-state in a period infiltrated by the Hurrians, but yet from ca. 1300 gradually dominated by the Aramaeans; from them we have the most important source material, among which the oldest inscription, a Phoenician-Hittite memorial inscription for King Kilamuwa, is dated to ca. 820 BC[269].

In KAI, 214, 2a mention is made of the gods whom King Panamuwa praises for his royal dignity: Hadad, El, Reshef, Râkib-El and Shamash, repeated in l. 2b-3: Hadad, Râkib-El, Shamash and Reshef; about the last-mentioned god it is besides stated "and Reshef stood with me", and the names of the lauded kings are repeated in l. 11, but now in this order: Hadad, El, Râkib-El, Shamash and 'RQ-Reshef. We note that Reshef in l. 2-3 is mentioned three times, the last occurrence emphasizing Reshef's support of the king, and that Reshef in l. 11 is combined with the name 'RQ. In other words, the god Reshef appears to take up an especially close position with King Panamuwa[270]. Besides, Reshef's special position is marked by his varying place in the threefold enumeration of the gods' names, and with the name 'RQ – Reshef it is obvious that the king was anxious finally to emphasize the special character of this god. On the other hand the meaning of the name 'RQ is not as obvious; it has caused some trouble to scholars as competent as H. Donner and W. Röllig: "Das Element ' RQ hat sich bisher allen Deutungsversuchen entzogen"[271]; but a very probable explanation, which has been endorsed by the most recent research, too, is the explanation put forth as early as in 1896 by G. Hoffmann, according to which 'RQ is the name 'Arṣû *alias* Ruḍâ (with the well-known phonetic shift: Arabic *ḍ* > Aramaic *q*)[272].

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268. Tropper (1993) 47-49; KAI, II, 214.

269. KAI, 25; Tropper (1993) 27-46.

270. Cf. Fulco (1976) 45 and Lipinski (1994) 208.

271. KAI, III 219.

272. Hoffmann (1896) 214; 228 and 252; in recent literature this interpretation has been proposed repeatedly by E. Lipinski who, however, erroneously refers constantly to B. Landsberger as being the first to have propounded this explanation: Lipinski (1983) 15 (note 5!)-21; (1994) 208-211 and (2000) 617-620, with an account of the phonetic development. The identification with 'Arṣû is endorsed, among others, by Fulco (1976) 45 and Tropper (1993) 23.

'ARQ-Reshef belongs to the category of compound names of gods of which the west Semitic religion has several examples and with varying senses. In this case the compound name undoubtedly expresses an *ad hoc* identity between the god Reshef, very well known in the entire Semitic world, and 'Arṣû[273]. But the circumstance that Reshef is a god, well known already from the beginning of the second millennium and far into Hellenistic times and with a very complex nature, makes it necessary – from what we now know of 'Arṣû – to consider which aspects of Reshef's nature can have contributed to the identification expressed by the name 'ARQ-Reshef[274].

Reshef's complex nature is already revealed in as different meanings of the name as "flame, glow, lightning, plague, fever", to which may be added the epithets associated with the name, as for instance "the Reshef of the Arrow", "the Lord of the Arrow, Reshef", "the Reshef of the He-goats (or: the Birds)", "the Reshef of the Host" and "Reshef the Powerful One" (or: "the Generous One"). Add to this that in Ugarit Reshef is directly identified with the Akkadian god of the netherworld and of war and the plague Nergal[275]. From the extensive iconographical material, mainly Egyptian or influenced by the genuine Egyptian material[276], we shall content ourselves here with mentioning as the most relevant examples depictions of Nergal-Reshef on some *Syrian* seal pictures from the middle of the second millennium; thus a seal picture with Nergal's name shows a standing figure wearing a tiara with two striking horns, carrying a lance in his left hand, and leaning on a bow; on each side the Egyptian *'nḫ* sign is seen, and in front

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273. A survey of compound names of gods: KAI, III 88-89; on 'RQ-Reshef as indicating identity, cf. Dussaud (1946) 227-228; Lipinski (1983) 17-19, who takes the opportunity of proving the untenability of an identity between 'Arṣû and the Ugaritic goddess 'Arṣy, whose name must be accounted for on the basis of common Semitic *'rṣ*: earth.

274. On Reshef or Rashap, known in the Ebla and Ugaritic texts, and in the middle of the second millennium known to have become an element of Egyptian religion, cf. Müller (1980) 7-10; Xella (1979-80) 145-162, and Fulco (1976) *passim*; specifically on Reshef in Egypt: pp. 1-32.

275. See Caquot (1956) 53-68 on Reshef in the Old Testament; on the other Semitic material see Conrad (1971) 158-183 and Fulco (1976) 33-62; on Reshef in Ugarit and the identification with Nergal, see Nougayrol (1968) 57 and Xella (1979-80) 145-162. On Nergal cf. Tallqvist (1938/1974) 389-396.

276. Cf. Cornelius (1994) and Fulco (1976) *passim*.

of the figure there is a star. Another seal shows a similar figure who, however, instead of a lance is holding a sheaf of arrows; in front of the god is seen a gazelle or a goat with big horns. A third seal picture shows a goddess wearing a tiara ornamented with horns, and a sun disc, standing, turned towards a figure with the same headgear as on the first seal picture, and with a bow thrust towards the goddess, while the lance rests over the god's left shoulder; between the two figures there is a star[277]. As pointed out by the editor, P. Matthiae, Nergal-Reshef's attributes can be seen as an illustration of Reshef as "the Lord of the Arrow" that we came across both in Ugarit and in Phoenician inscriptions[278]; the seal picture with the gazelle or goat presumably finds its epigraphical confirmation with "the Reshef of the He-goats" in the Phoenician-Hittite inscription for King Azitawadda from ca. 720 BC, found in Karatepe in eastern Cilicia (KAT, 26, 12). In other words, here we see Nergal-Reshef as a god who clearly has a warlike function (the bow and the lance), but the warlike aspect combined with the he-goats has a protective function that is also suggested by the Hittite hieroglyphical rendering of Phoenician *ršp ṣprm* by (a stag's?) antlers[279]; this element, together with the astral symbols of the seal pictures, constitutes a clear parallel to 'Arṣû as he appears iconographically and sometimes also epigraphically on the Palmyrene tesserae: as an astral deity, and as an armed protector and guardian of animals and caravans[280]. That Nergal – Reshef was considered a warlike, but at the same time a protective god in Ugarit is obvious from personal names in which the Hittite logogram *dLAMMA*, equivalent to the name Nergal, appears together with the logogram *mSIG 5*, which corresponds to the Semitic root *n'm*, so that the personal names in question, ren-

277. Matthiae (1963) 27-43 and table XIV, 1-3.

278. Matthiae (1963) 37.

279. Cf. KAI, III, 41-42; Conrad (1971) 174 referring to H. Th. Bossert (1951) 272; 288, who gives detailed comments on the Hieroglyphical-Hittite rendering (212) of Phoenician *ršp ṣprm*, depicted as a stag's antlers; cf. also Barré (1978) 466. – On the debate over the meaning of the Phoenician name cf. Bron (1979) 88; 185, who prefers the meaning "the Reshef of the Birds". However, the gazelle's horns as Reshef's fixed attribute in the Egyptian iconography, cf. Fulco (1976) 29-30; 46, might support a meaning tending towards horned animals.

280. See p. 6-11 *supra*.

dered in west Semitic, become: Na'amreshef, i. e. "Gracious is Reshef"[281]. Of course it is immediately striking that this theophoric name is constituted by the very same Semitic root that forms the previously mentioned name of the god Mun'îm-Monimos *alias* 'Arṣû in Palmyra and Edessa. And the fact that Reshef appears once only in the Palmyrene inscriptions and even together with Babylonian-Assyrian deities may perhaps be naturally accounted for by the very presence of gods like 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû, with the same character and function as Reshef – Nergal, but with far more intense relations to the nearby north Arabian pantheon and culture[282].

In confirmation of Reshef-Nergal being an astral god we find in Ugarit an even stronger support than the astral symbols on the previously mentioned seal pictures. In the text KTU 1.78 the introductory four lines can be translated as follows:

"For six days during the month of
Ḫyr, when the sun sets, her gatekeeper
(is) Reshef"[283].

The text as a whole has been subjected to various interpretations which, however, all involve astronomical phenomena: solar eclipse, vernal equinox or the heliacal rising or setting of the planet Mars[284]. But in accordance with A. Cooper's statement: "Regardless of the specific astronomical phenomenon described, it is the mythological content of the text that is important here"[285], it is Reshef's role that will here be commented on in detail.

There seems to be agreement among scholars that Reshef, who as mentioned is identified with Nergal in Ugarit, with the function of "gatekeeper" for the sun (the goddess Shapash), is here to be understood as an astral figure, more precisely the planet Mars,

281. Cf. Barré (1978) 465-467, von Weiher (1971) 92, and Lipinski (1995) 180, cf. Lipinski (1983) 17, who also points to Ruḍâ as "originally a protective deity", cf. also p. 37 *supra*.

282. Reshef is mentioned together with the Babylonian-Assyrian goddesses Ḥertâ and Nanai: PAT 2766, cf. Cantineau (1936) 268-271.

283. Cooper (1987) 5; another equally probable translation in Pardee (2000) I, 418-419: "Pendant les six jours (après) la nouvelle lune (du mois) ḫiyyâru, le soleil est couché, son portier (étant) Rašap", cf. the comment *ibid.*, 419-425.

284. A survey of various interpretations: Dietrich-Loretz (1990) 41-48; Pardee (2000) I, 422-424.

285. Cooper (1987) 5.

with which Nergal is associated in Akkadian texts from the middle Babylonian period, i. e. ca. 1550-1000 BC[286]. Of Reshef's role in KTU l.78 M. Dietrich-O. Loretz rightly observe that "nach altorientalischer Anschauung war die Sonne bei ihrem Erscheinen von Begleitern umgeben"[287]; in other words, Reshef's function corresponds precisely to the one that the Emperor Julian's description, quoting the Syrian Iamblicos, gives of the cult of Azizos-Monimos in Edessa, where they are mentioned as the companions of the sun god Helios[288]. Reshef's role as an astral god, appearing in connection with the rising and setting of the divine sun, is testified to, besides in KTU l. 78, by four other Ugaritic texts, in which Reshef is called *ršp ḥgb,* which most scholars today will interpret to mean"Reshef, gardien de l'entrée" – most often with reference to KTU l. 78, 1-4 quoted above[289]; thus in an excellent formulation by D. Pardee, who besides refers to Psalm 19, 6 in the Old Testament: "Rapprochant le texte biblique de RS 12. 061 (= KTU 1, 78), on arrive même à penser que *ṯġr* était propre au rôle de Rašap lors du coucher de Šapaš, tandis que son rôle le matin, à l'est, était cet de *ḥgb*"[290]. The background to this function as guardian of the sun deity is the mythological view of the sun, which with the setting enters the dark netherworld, from which it rises again with the dawn – an idea that tallies perfectly with Nergal-Reshef's character as a god of the netherworld, which also finds expression in other Ugaritic texts[291].

Without insisting on total identity between 'RQ ('Arṣû)-Reshef

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286. Von Weiher (1971) 76-83; on Reshef-Nergal and the planet Mars in relation to Ugaritic texts, cf. De Jong-Van Soldt (1987-88) 68; Dietrich-Loretz (1990) 58-59 with further references. – On the middle Babylonian period, cf. von Soden (1969) 3.
287. Dietrich-Loretz (1990) 60.
288. Cf. p. 12 *supra.*
289. Thus in KTU 1. 90, 2; 1.106, 1;1.134, 2;1-168.1-2; three of the four texts are rather fragmentary, but nos. 90 and 168 seem to contain an allusion to a ritual "viewing" connected with sacrifices, while no. 1.106 is clearly a list of sacrifices to various deities, cf. Pardee (2000) I, 483-484; 588 sqq.; II, 751-753; 844-849. – For the name *ḥgb* see the survey in Pardee (1989-1990) 425; *id.* (2000) I, 484-485, where he seems inclined to favour the interpretation "gardien de l'entrée".
290. Pardee (2000) I, 485.
291. Cf. Avigad-Greenfield (1982) 126-127; Healey (1980) 239-242, and Lewis (1989) 35-46.

in Zinjirli and Reshef-Nergal as the latter appears in the very rich textual material found in the rest of the Near East, we can nevertheless from the contamination of 'Arṣû-Reshef in eighth-century Zinjirli find confirmation of the most essential features that – as we have seen above – characterize the two companion gods 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû or Monimos-Azizos in the later, Hellenistic north Syrian religion, with Palmyra and Edessa as the most distinctive places of worship: astral gods, kind protectors of cattle and property, and as such having a certain warlike appearance in the iconographical material[292]. As for Azizos, the warlike feature is already signalled by the name itself[293], while for 'Arṣû this feature, besides iconographically, is accentuated by the fact that in Palmyra his name is rendered in Greek by Ares[294]. It may be difficult to demonstrate the circumstances in which the 'Arṣû ('RQ) cult spread as far north as to Zinjirli – an influx of proto-Arabian peoples has been suggested as a possible explanation[295]. But in any case the entire textual material from Zinjirli testifies to a west Semitic pantheon, with Aramaic and Phoenician gods as the dominant ones[296].

After we have finished the presentation of the textual and iconographical material concerning 'Arṣû/Monimos-'Azîzû/Azizos and their Canaanite predecessors Shalim-Shaḥar, we shall conclude with a brief summary.

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292. Cf. p. 6-11 *supra.*
293. Cf. p. 12 *supra.*
294. Cf. p. 5; 11 *supra.*
295. Lipinski (1983) 17-21. But on the oldest Semitic culture in Zinjirli see Tropper (1993) 9-18, who does not mention any possible early Arabian infiltration.
296. Cf. Tropper (1993) 20-26.

Summary

When in 1906 J. Rendel Harris published "The Cult of the Heavenly Twins", he concluded in the chapter "Twins of the Sky" (p. 28) that "we see now the origin of the term Dioscuri; it is no peculiar Greek idea, but one which arose at a very early period of the human civilization". In his more detailed treatment of the Dioscuri in the work "Boanerges" (1913) Rendel Harris among other things observes about the cult in Syrian Edessa (p. xvii-xviii) that "it was well known that the chief religion at Edessa was Solar, in which the Sun was honoured along with two assessors, named Monim and Aziz. The names appear to be Semitic, but there can be little doubt that they correspond to the Twin-Brethren of the Aryan religions...", and he goes on to comment that "Edessa, itself, was in ancient times a meeting point of religions... we must not, however, assume Semitic ancestry for the Twins because they are called Monim and Aziz: these might be only names given by the Edessan Arabs to the Aryan or Parthian Twins", and he adds: "The question as to the existence of Twins in Semitic religion has to be investigated on its own merits...". This is exactly what has been the purpose of the present study. Among the texts that since Rendel Harris have made such a study possible are the discovery in 1899 of the Palmyrene inscription dedicated to the gods 'Arṣû and 'Azîzû[297], without doubt identical with Monimos and Azizos, and the appearance in the years after 1929 of the mythological texts from Ras Shamra-Ugarit, among them first and foremost the one (KTU 1.23) that gives an account of the birth of the two gods, Shaḥar and 'Shalim, the morning and evening star, whose rising and setting are heralded by the reds of the morning and evening sky[298].

Starting from the epigraphical and iconographical material from Syria, i. e. Palmyra, the Palmyrène and Edessa, material relating to 'Azîzû/Azizos and 'Arṣû/Monimos, we have been able to follow these deities further south, first in the Nabataean area

297. Cf. p. 6 and notes 8-9 *supra.*
298. Cf. p. 50-51 *supra.*

and in pre-Islamic North Arabia, chiefly on the basis of the Sabaean inscriptions. They appear under varying names, as Ruḍâ *alias* Orotalt, locally identified with the Nabataean Dushares, under the name Dionysos, worshipped as the child of god, borne by "the young girl and virgin" *alias* Aphrodite – Urania, who can therefore be named Phosphorus or the morning star. But behind the north Arabian Ruḍâ there is glimpsed an androgynous deity who later appears as either male or female, a doubleness that is presumably determined by the ancient Semitic conception of the Venus star, which as the morning star is male, and as the evening star female. This doubleness, early represented in Sumerian and Akkadian religion by Ishtar/'Athtar, later sporadically by the north Arabian Ruḍâ, but again in south Arabia – here more markedly – by 'Athtar, sometimes here called "the 'Athtar of the East" and "the 'Athṭar of the West", finds its explanation in an age when the Venus star was still viewed as two astral powers, the morning star and the evening star.

The picture of the two Semitic "Dioscuri" that appears from the west Semitic material, supplemented by an examination of south Arabian inscriptions, was then, as the central theme of this study, confronted with the Ugaritic material, mainly the text KTU 1.23. Here it could be established in the first place that the gods Shaḥar and Shalim, those whose appearance in the sky is heralded by the reds of morning and evening, appear as deities of the same character and nature as Azizos and Monimos in Edessa *alias* 'Azîzû and 'Arṣû, Ruḍâ (Orotalt-Dionysos) and 'Athtar. Next it was demonstrated that several of the mythological elements associated with these last-mentioned deities are more or less clearly present in the description in the Ugaritic mythological text concerning the conception and birth of the two Canaanite gods of light who are the same age, thus "the young girl or virgin" giving birth and in this connection the ritual drawing of water. To the last-mentioned element there also attaches what we have called the "Dionysian" element, which besides has a clear, independent role: the wine, its ripening and cultic use.

Before an account was given of other mythological elements shared by the Ugaritic text and the Aramaic and Arabian material, we noted a certain merging of agent deities in KTU 1.23 and the Palmyrene inscription PAT 0992, in which mention is made – besides 'Arṣû among others – of a deity with an otherwise

unknown name (Qismaya), who may perhaps be determined as being identical with the morning star ('Azîzû).

A central topic in KTU 1.23 is the scene itself of the activity of the two gods of light: the steppe, called "the holy steppe" – in summing up called "the *mdbr* theme" – and associated with this "the survival topic": the two young gods' survival on the steppe, understood as a critical phase where their vitality is to stand the test. The topic is also found in Old Testament texts (most clearly conveyed in Isaiah 7, 14-16), which in mythological terms refer to "the young girl" giving birth to the child of god. With deities that are thus trained to move and survive on the steppe, a parallelism may be glimpsed between the Ugaritic Shaḥar-Shalim and the Aramaic 'Arṣû-'Azîzû in their capacity of gods who conduct and watch over the travellers in the Syrian desert, a function that we saw was also performed by the north Arabian Ruḍâ and the south Arabian 'Athtar.

After having concluded our reflections on the Ugaritic material *vis-à-vis* the younger Aramaic and Arabian material, we examined the role played by Shaḥar and 'Azîzû/Azizos in their capacity as astral deities in respectively Isaiah 14, 12-15 and the apocalyptic First Book of Enoch, here as rebellious angels or the sons of god. This development, naturally determined by Old Testament monotheism, for Azizos leads to his assuming a demonic character in the form of 'Azaz'el in the ritual for the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16, and in the later Talmudic and Midrashic literature. In this connection a literary merging of elements could be observed in the description of the landscape to which 'Azaz'el, the scapegoat, was sent for destruction, and "the sacred landscape" in which Shaḥar and Shalim move in the Ugaritic text. Finally, in the Talmudic and Midrashic literature it was possible to trace reminiscences connected with the two rebellious angels, 'Azaz'el and Shemîḥazâ, with a clear affinity to the topic of the young woman (the heavenly goddess) giving birth to the child of god.

In conclusion, comparative reflections were made concerning the name of the god 'RQ-Reshef in the Aramaic Hadad inscription from Sam'al, near Zinjirli, dated to ca. 750. If it is assumed that the name 'RQ renders 'Arṣû, this is the oldest dated mention of this god, whose linking with Reshef emphasizes 'Arṣû's character of being a warlike god, as he appears in the later Palmyrene material. Finally it was considered whether the role taken up by

Reshef in Ugarit as the gatekeeper of the sun goddess – to be compared with the description of Helios, Azizos and Monimos in Edessa – can have motivated the linking of ‘RQ (= ’Arṣû)-Reshef in Zinjirli. It is also thought-provoking that Reshef in his capacity as an astral god – via the identification with the Babylonian Nergal – is represented by the planet Mars. And it was precisely with Ares (*alias* Mars), that is in his capacity as a warlike and protective god, that ’Arṣû was identified *verbis expressis* in Palmyra.

Abbreviations

AAAS	Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syriens-Palästinas
ANEP	Ancient Near Eastern Texts in Picture (3.ed.), ed. J.B. Pritchard.
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BH.K	Biblia Hebraica, ed. R. Kittel
CIS II	Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum. Pars secunda inscriptiones aramaicas continens. Paris 1926.
CIS IV	Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum. Pars quarta inscriptiones himyariticas et sabæas continens, Paris 1889 sqq.
DaM	Damaszener Mitteilungen
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément.
DDD	Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, ed. K. Van der Toorn e.a., Leiden-New York-Köln . 1995.
DTT	Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift
DUL	A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition I-II, ed. del Olmo Lete, G.-Sanmartin, J. (transl. Watson, G.E.). Leiden 2002.
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain
HAL	Hebräisches u. aramäisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament I-II, ed. Koehler, L., u. Baumgartner, W., Leiden 1995.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
KAI	Kanaanäische u.aramäische Inschriften I-III (2.Ausg.), ed. Donner, H. u. Röllig, W., Wiesbaden 1968
KTU	The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other Places, ed. Dietrich, M., Loretz, O., Sanmartin, J.; Münster 1995
LIMC	Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae. Zürich-München
MRS	Mission de Ras Shamra
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université de Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth
NTT	Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica

PAT	Palmyrene Aramaic Texts, ed. Hillers, D. R.-Cussini, E. Baltimore-London 1996
PL	Patrologia latina, ed. J. Migne
PNO	Schlumberger, D., La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest. Paris 1951
PRU	II-V Le palais royal d'Ugarit, t. II-V (MRS VII, VI, IX, XI). Paris
RES	Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique. Paris
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RSO	Ras Shamra-Ougarit. Paris
RTP	Recueil des tesséres de Palmyre, éd. Ingholt, H., Seyrig, H., Starcky, J. et Caquot, A. Paris 1955
SS	Studi Semitici
ThWAT	Theol. Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament. 1973 sqq., Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln-Mainz
TO I	Textes ougaritiques, t. I. Mythes et légendes. Introduction, traduction, commentaire par A. Caquot, M. Sznycer et A. Herdner. Paris 1974
UF	Ugaritforschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

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